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New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Axworthy (Canada): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. Your experience and wisdom will doubtless guide us in carrying out the important work ahead.

As we all know, that work is to immediately and resolutely transform the high hopes of the Millennium Summit into a better reality for the peoples for whom the United Nations was founded.

(spoke in French)

This means assuming responsibility for our actions and our inaction. It also means that Governments must be ready to assume their responsibility for their citizens.

Last week our leaders delivered here a message of hope and determination. Their words clearly showed that we all need the United Nations. The United Nations is the only organization that embodies universal values; that offers a global forum to address common problems; and that is on the front line around the world fighting for people.

(spoke in English)

There was another message from the Summit about whether the United Nations is keeping up with the times: about whether we, the Member States — custodians of the Organization and guardians of the Charter — have the political will to support renewal and modernization.

When the lights turned off last Friday night here in New York, did other lights go on around the world — in our Chancery offices, Parliamentary assemblies and Cabinet meeting rooms — to illuminate the way forward? Are we all, each in our own way, asking how we can change our ways to better help the United Nations manage a new global agenda?

Clearly, globalization has brought unprecedented benefits and possibilities. But it also clearly brings new risks to people in all our countries. Many of those new risks cross State lines, while most violent conflict now occurs within States' borders. In both cases, the impact is felt directly by ordinary people.

Yet the debate within the United Nations remains driven — and too often circumscribed — by rigid notions of sovereignty and narrow conceptions of national interest. And action by the United Nations remains hampered by inflexible institutional structures that have become increasingly inward-looking, driven by their own interests rather than by those they were designed to serve.

The Secretary-General has, with a courage rarely seen in public life, given us a vision of a way forward.

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It is a vision that serves the world's people, and one that resonates with them, even though it may aggravate some of their Governments. He has challenged us to follow his lead, to adopt a people-centred approach to international relations, to move this Organization from the sidelines to the forefront of change.

This is not a new agenda for Canada. Indeed, over the past five years, promoting human security has been the focus of our own approach to our changing world. And it has been encouraging to see the shift in attitude toward a more realistic sense of what it means to be secure in the world as an individual.

Our leaders endorsed this new vision in their Summit Declaration. But if we have truly come to the understanding that security means more than protecting borders, we must now act to turn last week's good intentions into effective action. This means taking responsibility to adapt our institutions, broaden participation in their functioning, and increase transparency and accountability to make a tangible difference for the people we represent.

It also means responsible, accountable global behaviour, sharing and protecting the common space that sustains life.

Aggressive pursuit of the global arms control and disarmament agenda is the ultimate responsible act. Our generation built the nuclear arsenals that are outmoded and rotting; we produced the chemical weapons that poison people; and today we still make and distribute the small arms that are found everywhere: in the hands of children, the arsenals of drug dealers and the garrisons of guerrilla fighters.

But we have also had a certain foresight to begin building a system of international obligations and principles to contain such behaviour. We now have to validate and implement these instruments. Above all, we must do nothing to damage them.

Certainly, Governments must prepare for the defence of their people. Responsible defence is an element of responsible government. But surely, our responsibility to defend our citizens begins not with the development of new weapons systems, but by dismantling old ones: by ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); by joining the 104 States parties to the Ottawa Treaty on landmines; by implementing the international non-proliferation norms and disarmament obligations embodied in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); by developing comprehensive action plans to stop the proliferation of small arms and missile technology.

The collective action of States working for the long-term security of their people is clearly the preferable path. But where States are unable, or unwilling, to protect their citizens, the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, has a special responsibility to act.

Today, most wars are fought within failed States. In these wars, it is the victimization of civilians that is the motive, the means and the manifestation of a conflict.

If the Council is to acquit itself of its responsibility to these people, their protection must be at the core of its work, not at its periphery.

This is the agenda that Canada has brought to the Security Council over the past two years. It has not been an easy task, but I would like to acknowledge that the Security Council is meeting the new challenges. In recent months, the Council's work has increasingly focused on the protection of civilians, with action in the areas of AIDS, physical protection, war-affected children and sanctions reform. The Council has recognized that dealing with these issues is critical to building effective peace-support operations, and has embodied this recognition in recent resolutions. Today, we are providing members a checklist, a checklist of responsible action in the Security Council.

(spoke in French)

The Brahimi report also proposes a plan of action. It is a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the United Nations capacity to help people. Canada supports the panel's findings. We will be its strongest advocate and can be counted upon to work tirelessly to build the political support required to implement both the spirit and the letter of its recommendations.

(spoke in English)

By far the most difficult challenge in protecting civilians in armed conflict is in situations where abuse is most severe: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, massive and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law which cause widespread suffering, loss of life and abuse.

We need a new form of deterrence against such forms of behaviour. The establishment of an

International Criminal Court (ICC), which makes impunity illegal and which holds individuals directly accountable for their actions, is that deterrent. And if its power to deter the abuse of people fails, the Statute provides both a basis and a structure to take concrete legal action to redress injustice.

The Court's Statute provides us with a unique opportunity to fix one of the worst failings in the international system. Today I appeal to every Government here that has not done so to sign the Rome Statute by December and to ratify it on an urgent basis, so that the world's people can finally have the justice they deserve.

Canada seeks to systematically put in place the building blocks for a new type of international system, one that is inspired and guided by the United Nations Charter, but that is also prepared to deal with the underside and underworld of globalization.

Of course, prevention is the best form of intervention. But when preventive measures fail; when the quiet diplomatic efforts and the targeted sanctions do not work; when the fact-finders find facts too horrendous to imagine; then there must be recourse to more robust action.

The question of intervention in these instances, including, as a last resort, the use of military force, is fraught with difficulty and controversy. Many would sweep it under the rug as too divisive, too difficult, too damaging to the status quo. But Rwanda, Cambodia, Srebrenica and Kosovo remind us that it is important to focus on this question. It would be easy to pretend that the humanitarian tragedies associated with these places are a thing of the past. It would be easy, but it would be wrong. There is no certainty that similar atrocities will not happen again. Indeed, the opposite is more likely. The spiral into extremes of human suffering cannot always be constrained.

Reading the editorial page of *The New York Times* on Tuesday, 12 September, we realize that some would have us believe that the United Nations Charter was written only to protect States and State interests:

> "intervening in civil conflicts takes the United Nations a step too far".

I disagree. I say that in the face of egregious human suffering it is a step in the right direction.

Nothing so threatens the United Nations very future as this apparent contradiction between principle and power; between people's security and Governments' interests; between, in short, humanitarian intervention and State sovereignty.

Last fall I stood before this body and argued that the United Nations Charter was written for people. Our collective agenda here is not the nation States' agenda, or the ministers' agenda, or the diplomats' agenda. It is the people's agenda. Indeed, "We the peoples" are the opening words of the Charter. Those who would seek to hide behind that document to justify inaction need only to read its preamble to reacquaint themselves with its original intent.

Secretary-General Annan has challenged us to rethink what it means to be responsible, sovereign States. Canada has responded by creating an independent international commission on intervention and State sovereignty. Its purpose is to contribute to building a broader understanding of the issue, and to foster a global political consensus on how to move forward. The commission will be led by two co-chairpersons — one from the developing and one from the developed world — with the participation of a wide range of representatives of Governments and non-governmental organizations from all regions and under the overall guidance of an advisory board composed of ministers, former ministers and distinguished practitioners from the academic, humanitarian and legal fields.

The commission will undertake its work during this Millennium Assembly year, and will present its recommendations in 12 months' time. I ask those present here in the Assembly Hall to join in this enterprise, difficult as it may be, so that we can seek to reconcile these concepts to find the space that we can all share.

It is difficult, but it is not impossible. We have done it before. Thirteen years ago, the Brundtland Commission's report, "Our Common Future", took two seemingly contradictory ideas — economic development and the protection of the environment — and out of that contradiction forged a synthesis called sustainable development. That new concept fundamentally changed the way in which the world thinks about those issues, and its work informs our thinking to this very day. It is Canada's hope that this new commission can diffuse the anxiety that surrounds

the issues of intervention and sovereignty by building a similar bridge between our current notions of these concepts, and in so doing help to define the way ahead for Governments and the United Nations to tackle the most challenging international dilemma of the twenty-first century.

However, the responsibility no longer stops just with Governments. The private sector must also take its responsibility for the communities on which it depends for its business. Ethical business is good business. The many companies that have joined the Secretary-General's Global Compact with Business recognize that profit made on the backs of exploited and abused children — by gun-running, drug dealing or conflict diamonds — is no longer acceptable. In the globalized economy, the world's people are the ultimate shareholders. If they do not profit, no one will. We must therefore work on all of these fronts and with all of these new players to build a future where human security is universally respected and protected. In the meantime, there are steps that we can take to protect the most vulnerable.

To build a world that values human security we must start with concern and action for those who will inherit it. It is fitting, therefore, that in this year of fresh resolve the future of our children is a key element of the agenda, particularly through the special session on children that is to be held next year. Nowhere is the safety and well-being of children more at risk than in conflict situations. Children should have no part in war. Yet today they are among its main victims, counting in the millions.

(spoke in French)

Four years ago, Graça Machel brought attention to the horrific plight of war-affected children. Since then, action has been taken too reduce their suffering, most notably with the appointment of Olara Otunnu as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and, more recently, with the historic agreement last January on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

This week, with Graça Machel as honorary Chairperson, Canada is hosting in Winnipeg the International Conference on War-Affected Children. This meeting, the first of its kind, brings together more than 130 Governments, 60 non-governmental organizations and private sector groups, international organizations and young people from every region of the world.

(spoke in English)

I am pleased that so many ministers and senior officials from the Organization will join us in Winnipeg this weekend. I encourage those not already represented to attend.

The aim of the conference is twofold: to formulate a comprehensive, global action plan and to forge the necessary political will to implement it. Together, we hope it will help children traumatized by war, and ultimately eliminate their involvement and victimization in conflict.

Earlier this week in Winnipeg, as we opened the conference, a young Ugandan girl named Grace spoke to me, at a meeting of young people affected by war, about her experience as a child soldier. Her story was one of victimization and chilling brutality. Her belief that the international community could help her and others like her was touching and inspiring. Her plea for us to do so is the essence of the Organization's vocation. Indeed, it is one of our basic responsibilities. For me, that young woman's simple appeal makes it clear that we have no option but to be ready, to be willing, and to be able to forge a United Nations for the twenty-first century.

In view of the daunting challenges ahead, any attempt to retreat, to shut out the world or to turn away from international engagement would be to follow a dangerous path that is neither practical nor desirable. The truth is that we share a common humanity. The reality is that we are linked by the forces of history into a common destiny. The fact is that the answers to our problems lie in strengthening, not diminishing, global cooperation and global solutions.

In today's world, the security of States and the security of people are indivisible. Providing for that security is a necessary precondition for success in other important endeavours, such as advancing economic aid and trade development. In this new century, too many people like Grace are still subject to the worst of the past century: to the scourge of war, to human rights abuses and to too few prospects for social progress and a better standard of living. Yet the hopes contained in the United Nations Charter still have meaning for them, and indeed relevance for all of us. Fulfilling its aspirations is our enduring goal and fundamental

responsibility. With human security as our guide, let us make it our focus as we renew our commitment to the purposes of the United Nations and to a better future for Grace and for all the people that we represent.

This goal is a responsibility that I have been honoured to share with many of those present here over the past five years. It is a goal that we must all continue to strive towards — whatever our position in life, whatever our title — in order to ensure that this system we have built does not surrender to the cynics who offer no alternatives, or to the game players who paralyse the transcendent purposes of the United Nations for simple transitory diplomatic points.

Only in so doing will we truly live up to the promise contained in the Charter: to serve the majesty of the people and to make this Organization work for them.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Jamaica, His Excellency The Honourable Paul Robertson.

Mr. Robertson (Jamaica): Sir, I offer you Jamaica's warmest congratulations as you assume the high honour of the presidency of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations.

At the same time, I wish to express our appreciation to the outgoing President, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Foreign Minister of Namibia, who, by his astute and judicious leadership, brought to a successful conclusion the work of the fifty-fourth session.

I also take this opportunity to welcome Tuvalu, a fellow small island State, to the United Nations family.

We meet in the wake of the historic gathering of world leaders last week, when the international community sought to redefine and articulate a common vision for the future of all its citizens. We now have the opportunity — indeed, the responsibility — to evaluate just how far we have come in the mission we set for ourselves through this Organization; to address honestly our shortcomings in commitment and action; and to examine practical, realistic strategies that will result in measurable progress in areas identified for urgent action.

The Secretary-General, whom we commend for his stewardship during the past year, has urged us to consider a world in the future free from poverty. Indeed, promoting development that ensures the well-being of all peoples is one of the fundamental goals of this Organization. However, a review of our efforts to achieve this ideal shows uneven progress through an increasingly diffused institutional structure.

Over the past decade, we have sought to refocus and articulate the development agenda by addressing key issues in a series of special global conferences. Through the respective political commitments and plans of action which we agreed to implement, we have sought to devise a network of policies and programmes to promote people-centred, sustainable development.

Yet economic strategies embracing these goals have brought little tangible benefit to the majority of citizens of the international community. Nearly half of the world's people languish in extreme poverty, and still more remain on the fringes of the global economy.

Development efforts have been frustrated by the challenges posed by globalization and trade liberalization. Sustainable development ultimately involves an enhanced capacity for income and employment generation, as well as the provision of equitable health, education and other social benefits. But this cannot be achieved without economic growth and expansion. It is this opportunity that globalization, which indeed carries the potential, has so far failed to deliver to the majority of developing countries.

For small island States like Jamaica, there is another dimension to the development challenge. This is because of the well-known economic limitations of size, market and resource base, a fragile ecosystem and susceptibility to natural disasters. Decades of investment in infrastructure and industry can be wiped out during a single hurricane, destroying the economy and diverting resources to reconstruction and rehabilitation for a number of years.

Small economies attempting to compete effectively in the international trading system are just as vulnerable. There is a need for an urgent review of the inequities in the global trading system whereby selective application of the regulations permits developed countries to maintain protectionist policies and subsidies that work against developing country exports, while stripping the more vulnerable of preferential market access. We are deeply concerned that a mechanism established to promote free trade for growth and development could be so manipulated that it exposes the smallest and weakest to a hostile trading environment while removing their means of survival.

Special and differential treatment provisions have not been implemented, and the request for duty-free, quota-free treatment for the least developed countries has not been agreed to.

We are particularly disappointed that, in ongoing negotiations to reach agreement on a marketing regime for bananas that is compatible with the World Trade Organization (WTO), we have found little flexibility, no empathy and an unwillingness to compromise on the part of those challenging the regime. Meanwhile, implementation of the WTO panel ruling has resulted in a dramatic loss of export markets in some Caribbean Community (CARICOM) States, spiralling unemployment, increasing poverty and many other social ills. For there can be no development without growth, and no growth without trade.

Deteriorating terms of trade adversely affect the balance of payments, exacerbating external debt. Many developing countries continue to experience severe debt burdens, and, in some cases, the debt problem has worsened over the past decade, trapping those countries in a vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment. We must address the debilitating effect of debt servicing, which undermines growth prospects and compromises governments' capacity to finance basic social programmes. The international community should implement the debt-relief schemes already agreed to and design new mechanisms appropriate to different countries' circumstances.

The globalization of trade, finance and swiftly advancing information technology will present unprecedented opportunities well into the twenty-first century. For developing countries, however, the challenges of the trading system, limited access to international financial flows, a crippling debt burden and a low capacity to assimilate information technology will prevent meaningful participation in the international marketplace. Hence, the widening gap between rich and poor nations in the face of unlimited opportunity is the disturbing irony that we now contemplate.

If we are now to lay the foundation for a world free from poverty, then a new ethos in global governance must prevail: one that gives more than lip service to the development aspirations of developing countries; one that addresses responsibly the need for economic adjustment, reform and closer monitoring of the international financial infrastructure; and one that promotes greater coordination and cooperation between the major institutions and intergovernmental organizations responsible for international trade, finance and development.

That such cooperation is already being explored is indeed encouraging. But we will need serious commitment. Until now, there have been no parallel discussions on reforming the international financial architecture and the international trading system. The work of the Preparatory Committee for the High-level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development, including consultations with the Bretton Woods institutions, has progressed uneasily, leaving uncertainty regarding the outcome and likely success of that landmark meeting. We will wait to see whether meaningful World Trade Organization (WTO) participation will take place, as we consider it important to successful deliberations.

Of course, we applaud the evolving relationship between the Bretton Woods institutions and the Economic and Social Council. Each brings to the partnership its unique characteristics and strengths, which should make for successful collaboration. Perhaps similar relationships might also be established with the World Trade Organization. That cooperation, long overdue, reinforces the integral role that we believe the United Nations should play in key international decision-making on all issues which affect sustainable human development. We look forward to the extension of this cooperation beyond the co-financing of development projects, towards the harmonization of mechanisms and policies.

The importance of South-South cooperation as an effective instrument for the promotion of development among developing countries cannot be overemphasized. The historic meeting of the leaders of the South, held at Havana this year, strengthened our commitment to forge a common strategy for our future, sharing resources, expertise and best practices in partnership with one another. We strongly urge the continued strengthening of mechanisms that advance South-South relations and promote self-reliance. Increasingly, we must look to each other for our survival in the existing global environment.

We continue to look to the organs and agencies of the United Nations system to play a central role in supporting and advancing the development efforts of Member States. We are deeply concerned at the decline

in contributions to core resources for operational activities, and at the effect this has had in the narrowing and re-ordering of priorities in programme delivery. It is impossible to reconcile the contraction in core contributions with the donor community's expressed commitment to multilateral development assistance. The capacity of United Nations funds and programmes to maintain current levels of programme delivery is a matter deserving the urgent attention of Member States. We take this opportunity to place on record our appreciation for the valuable work of United Nations operational agencies in Jamaica.

Next year's special session of the General Assembly on children will give the international community an opportunity to renew its commitment and to consider further action to improve the quality of life for the world's children in the next decade.

The role of the United Nations as defender of international peace and security has undergone major transformation in the past decade. As inter-State tensions dissolved with the end of the cold war, civil conflicts developed in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe to take their place. The Security Council is now searching to adjust and redefine an effective strategy to deal with the new imperatives of peacekeeping and peace-building. This has meant seeking a delicate balance between respect for sovereignty and the urgent need for humanitarian intervention.

In too many cases the resolution of conflict has remained elusive owing to political ambitions or to racial or ethnic intolerance. Furthermore, the brutality and violence of conflict have often taken their toll on innocent civilians and children, creating still more new challenges with an increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons. Humanitarian intervention in such cases is imperative.

The effectiveness of peacekeeping missions is under scrutiny in the face of sharply escalating peacekeeping budgets. Rather than waiting until conflicts spiral out of control, we need to place more emphasis on conflict prevention. Jamaica therefore strongly supports the formulation of a comprehensive United Nations strategy to address the root causes of conflict.

It is time that we acknowledged that economic deprivation and social injustice lead to political and economic instability. Therefore, effective conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace building must incorporate a development component, and provide for the strengthening of civil institutions, particularly in post-conflict reconstruction.

And we must not forget the importance of adequately equipping the United Nations machinery to ensure robust intervention at every stage of the peacekeeping process, particularly for rapid deployment when necessary. This should also include resources adequate to ensure the safety of our troops deployed in missions across the world. It is the very least that we owe them. Jamaica pays tribute today to those who have paid the ultimate price in the service of peace.

The deadly flow of illegal small arms around the world continues unabated, sustained by greed and lawlessness. This illicit arms trade contributes significantly to the escalation and perpetuation of violence in conflict and post-conflict areas, undermining peacekeeping operations and frustrating efforts at disarmament, demobilization and the restoration of civil order. But this phenomenon is not unique to countries in a state of war. The illegal traffic in weapons is also linked to the illicit trade in narcotics, and this undermines stable democracies like Jamaica, destroying the social fabric of our communities.

This situation simply cannot stand. Urgent action is needed. Global interdependence warrants collective action to stem the flow of these guns from producer to receiving States. The responsibility to curb this illicit traffic cannot rest with the receiving States alone.

Jamaica looks with anticipation to the convening of the first International Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects next year. It is our hope that this meeting will address comprehensively and decisively national, regional and international measures to regulate and control the legal manufacture, acquisition and transfer of small arms; measures related to the marking, registration and tracing of these weapons; and mechanisms for the systematic exchange of information.

The transhipment of nuclear and other hazardous waste through the Caribbean Sea poses yet another kind of danger to the security of small island States of the subregion. The Caribbean Community has repeatedly expressed concern at the threat to the fragile marine and coastal environment of the Caribbean posed by this continued practice. A single nuclear accident in

this semi-enclosed sea would have consequences we dare not even contemplate.

This concern was again brought to the attention of the international community during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on Nuclear Non-Proliferation, held earlier this year. We look forward to cooperating with like-minded States, and we propose to work towards ensuring that a regime is established for liability and compensation to our countries in the event of an accident.

On Friday, 8 September, Jamaica signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We now look forward to the contribution that the Court will ultimately make to the strengthening of international jurisprudence, by addressing the serious crimes of global concern committed by individuals who hitherto escaped the reach of the law.

We are also very pleased to report that the International Seabed Authority has completed its drafting of the Mining Code. This marks an important first step in the process toward the full establishment of operations of the Authority that will ultimately enable all nations to share in exploitation of the resources of the seabed. Jamaica encourages wider participation in the work of the International Seabed Authority and urges Member States to act to ensure its continued financial viability.

While the United Nations is by no means perfect, we still meet here because we hold an enduring faith in the principles and ideals that it represents. We are convinced that it remains the best forum for dialogue and resolution of disputes. Let us now face the future together responsibly, with full respect for the needs, aspirations and rights of our fellow man. This may well be difficult to achieve, but shared objectives, shared commitment and shared responsibilities will ensure a better world for all humankind.

As we contemplate the challenges for the future, let us resolve to begin a new dialogue within the United Nations system to forge a global partnership for peace, democracy and economic progress.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oskaras Jusys, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.

Mr. Jusys (Lithuania): I would like to say, Mr. President, that I take special pleasure in seeing you preside over this Millennium Assembly session. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support in all your endeavours. As one of the Vice-Presidents of the past session, I want to convey my special appreciation to my colleague and your predecessor, the Foreign Minister of Namibia, Theo-Ben Gurirab. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General for presenting his report "We the Peoples" to the world community.

Allow me also to convey my delegation's warm welcome to Tuvalu as a new member of the United Nations.

It is both remarkable and profoundly logical that in the beginning of the new millennium high representatives of almost 200 nations have gathered for one sole purpose — to comprehend challenges of the contemporary world. The fact that we all have gathered here, representing all regions of the world, cultures and religions, means that we all share the belief in the value, viability and potential of the United Nations. Heads of State and Government, during the course of the Millennium Summit, have guided us towards strengthening the United Nations, including its central role in peacekeeping and poverty eradication. Our task now is to act upon their guidance.

Globalization, the digital revolution and the triumph of free trade have transformed the world into a vibrant world economy. Interdependence within the world economy emphasizes collective problems and solutions. Thus, the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and many other international organizations are indispensable mechanisms in achieving stable peace, in assisting in shaping the course of development, and in ensuring that the world economy provides benefits for all.

Never has the world been so well off. Yet, never has it been confronted with so many problems on the global scale. The nature of threats has entirely changed. The phenomena are so complex that they defy easy generalization. These phenomena comprise extreme poverty and marginalization of entire communities; gross violations of human rights; ethnic conflicts and genocide; arms proliferation; terrorism; and environmental degradation.

No effort should be spared to free people from dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty. The goals adopted at the Millennium Summit are challenging. Assistance, new trade arrangements, and debt relief

will hardly constitute a panacea, unless necessary and strong commitments to poverty reduction, economic equality, combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic and supporting education are reflected, first and foremost, in national policies of individual States, and concurrently on the agendas of international organizations. Good health, literacy, and education are critical assets for economic development. Human capital, combined with a high level of economic equality, good governance, and abiding by the rule of law can really make a difference. This is the course we strongly uphold if we aim at reducing by half the level of extreme poverty by 2015 and achieving sustainable development.

The realities are that most of the economic thinking and ruling is being done within the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization or the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OSCE), and a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development should be sought between these organizations and institutions and the United Nations.

We have yet to learn how to manage the spin-offs of globalization and how best to make use of international mechanisms to address new forms of threats. Better yet, prevention is preferable to cure. For really effective prevention, a broader definition of security is vital and must encompass pressing economic and social problems. The root causes of conflicts should be addressed as a fundamental part of efforts to establish secure peace and stability.

Should preventative strategies yield no results, the United Nations must have a truly effective peacekeeping capacity at its disposal. Lithuania will support every effort to fix structural deficiencies within the United Nations and adequately to staff and finance relevant departments. Provided the determination, resources, capacity and willingness are available, I believe, humanitarian catastrophes and crises can be averted. Proposals to improve the United Nations peacekeeping capacity and performance, especially those contained in the Brahimi report, have been widely endorsed by our leaders. Now we have to work on it with a view to shifting the historically prevailing conception of peacekeeping as an ad hoc job to one of the core functions of the United Nations.

Great challenges to the new international way of containing and resolving ethnic conflicts await in Africa. A prospective strategy could be to encourage and assist regional organizations, especially the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Community of West African States; involve civil society and the business community; and, most notably, enhance the United Nations, especially the Security Council's capacity to act well in advance, before a crisis gets out of hand. Pledges to contribute to a safer world add up to nothing if mounting demands for adequately trained and equipped peacekeepers and civilian policemen, judges and administrators fall on deaf ears. East Timorese, Kosovars and Sierra Leoneans are pinning their hopes on us. Failure to respond to them would mean in the end that we do no more than celebrate our own individual security.

Lithuania has always been and remains committed to building collective security. On the international level, Lithuania emphasizes active participation in international organizations and its substantial contribution to peacekeeping efforts, such as its participation in the United Nations standby arrangements system or, from the very beginning of the international engagement in the Balkans, making our civilian policemen and military available to the missions in Bosnia and Kosovo. Moreover, additional commitments will promptly follow as more highly trained policemen and troops become available. In this regard, I wish to voice our strong desire to place a Lithuanian part of the joint Lithuanian-Polish peacekeeping battalion under the United Nations standby arrangements with a view to joining the Stand-by Forces High-Readiness Brigade.

On the regional level, we have made membership in alliances of democratic nations — the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization — our top priority. We regard the OSCE principles, including a country's right to choose its own security arrangements, to be of fundamental value to ensuring peace and security. We believe that, by taking this way, we will meet our economic, cultural, social and other concerns and enhance European security as a whole.

On the subregional level, we stress practical cooperative efforts to uphold democratic and economic transformation throughout the region. Over the past decade, our engagement with Poland has turned into a close partnership that has already produced remarkable results. Good bilateral relations with the neighbouring states of Latvia and Estonia have grown into a dynamic trilateral Baltic cooperation, which has expanded into a

broader Baltic-Nordic cooperation. We also seek to further develop mutually beneficial good-neighbourly relations with Russia. Joint Lithuanian-Russian projects on cooperation with the Kaliningrad region are a good example of our pursuit of a foreign policy of friendly relations, which also fully coincides with the European Union's Northern Dimension policies endorsed at the Feira European Union summit this June.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Cooperation requires wisdom and patience. Yet, all too often, guns have been a choice of cure for ethnic strife and social or economic collapse. Vigorous and urgent efforts are needed to curtail the proliferation of small arms. We deem it vital for the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to address critical issues in the field of transparency, legitimate transfers, accountability, enforcement of sanctions and observance of moratoriums. A commitment to the elimination of landmines should now be coupled with an effort towards putting small arms off limits to belligerent causes.

Against the background of gains in disarmament, a number of setbacks have made the picture less encouraging. We share the profound concerns aroused by the abundance of weapons of mass destruction and the proliferation of missiles. I fail to see any way to create a safer world other than reducing, eliminating and outlawing weapons of mass destruction. In the wake of the successful outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Lithuania will work with other committed nations to achieve unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament.

Certain fundamental values are essential to international relations. Such are human responsibility and human rights. At the Millennium Summit, President of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus spoke about his belief that

> "in the face of a globalized tomorrow, the United Nations will increase the scope of its human-dimension activities. Human rights should become a cornerstone of the emerging world structure". (*A/55/PV.5*)

The concept of the human dimension must be at the centre of all United Nations activities.

If we are to address the root causes of conflict, we have to admit that respect for human rights, the protection of minority rights and the institution of political arrangements in which all groups are represented are vital. For my region, of particular interest is determining how the international community can promote the rights of people coping with the post-communist transition.

The limits of human rights applicability are being constantly questioned. The United Nations should move ahead in the search for new and more effective instruments to fend off the challengers of human rights. Persons responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression should be brought to justice. If that is the goal which the international community is after, an effective International Criminal Court should start working as soon as possible. For its part, Lithuania will make good on its commitment to ratify the Rome Statute by the end of this year.

Based on the experience of my own country, I wish to stress that increasing the equality of social, economic, educational and political benefits across gender has a positive impact on economic development. These issues have been at the forefront of the agendas of all Lithuanian Governments since regaining independence, which have worked actively to help solve the question of equal rights and other problems which women face. One of our achievements is the adoption of the Law on Equal Opportunities, which is the first law of this kind in Central and Eastern Europe. Being a signatory State to the Second Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, I call for its early entry into force.

The attainment of freedom, security and welfare for people is feasible only by embracing the effects of globalization and not defying them. We have a global instrument readily available for that purpose, yet we keep arriving at the same conclusion: we need a United Nations with greater capacity and better performance. A number of measures have been carried out. The outstanding efforts of the Secretary-General cannot be overestimated. Lithuania supports the Secretary-General's greater emphasis on the United Nations as a results-based Organization. We also endorse the stress

on better management, mobilization of new resources and new forms of partnership. The Security Council should play its part in this regard. The lessons drawn from the Secretary-General's reports on Srebrenica and Rwanda have to be paid more than lip service.

Within the complex of measured designs for revitalizing the United Nations, our efforts to reform the Security Council occupy a prominent place. The Security Council would only win if it acquired a new power and authority base. I would like to reiterate Lithuania's position that the Security Council should be increased, both in permanent and non-permanent membership categories, and that the Eastern European Group should be given one additional non-permanent membership seat. In turn, even with a revitalized Council, cooperation with regional organizations should be strengthened.

The reforms, no matter how far-flung, may only remain a partial success as long as the United Nations is not given necessary resources. The Organization needs a sound and predictable financial footing. Therefore, Lithuania strongly supports a comprehensive review of both the regular-budget scale and the scale of assessment for peacekeeping operations. In the latter case, an ad hoc arrangement of 1973 has lost its touch with present day economic realities. We need to adjust the United Nations peacekeeping scale of assessment methodology to better reflect the current economic conditions of all Member States. I hope that the revision will enjoy support by all countries of the United Nations and will be carried out in an expeditious manner.

The United Nations symbolizes and guards the humankind hope for a better future. Let's make it happen!

The Acting President (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The next speaker will be Mr. Nizar Obaid Madani, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Madani (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure at the outset of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations to convey to His Excellency our sincerest congratulation for his election to the presidency of this session. His election to this important position reflects the respect of the international community for him personally, as well as the appreciation of the Member States for the positive role played by his country, Finland, in the international arena. I am confident that his presidency of this session will contribute effectively to our efforts to achieve the objectives towards which the international community aspires under the present, delicate international circumstances.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Foreign Minister of Namibia and president of the previous session of the United Nations General Assembly, who managed the affairs of the session with great competence and experience and who deserves our compliments and appreciation.

I am also pleased to express my thanks and appreciation to His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan, for his continuous and tireless efforts to achieve peace and enhance security and stability in our contemporary world, as well as for the competence and ability he has demonstrated in leading the affairs of this Organization, relying on his rich and exceptional experience in the international arena. In particular, I wish to commend His Excellency for his sincere and extensive efforts in organizing the Millennium Summit, which, God willing, will contribute to achieving fruitful results with positive effect on our peoples and nations while ushering in a new century full of challenges and opportunities.

On this occasion, I wish to welcome the Republic of Tuvalu to the membership of the United Nations, hoping that its membership will enhance the effectiveness of the Organization and its noble objectives.

The present session of the General Assembly has followed immediately the Millennium Summit, a unique historical event. World leaders met in a dignified gathering that exemplified the unity of the human race and their collective endeavour to live in peace, security and prosperity. That Summit represented a valuable opportunity to reflect on and to discuss whatever might lead to a better life for humanity. The world leaders pledged in the final Declaration of the Summit to exert all possible efforts to achieve peace, security and disarmament and eradicate poverty and disease. They affirmed the sovereign equality of nations, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence, and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The Summit also provided a valuable opportunity to

evaluate the course of this Organization throughout its history, which has been full of opportunities and challenges, so as to enable it to achieve its declared principles and purposes.

In this regard, a thorough and candid evaluation of the role of the United Nations was presented by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz, the Crown Prince and the head of the Saudi delegation to the Millennium Summit. He discussed the challenges and problems that have impeded the United Nations from achieving the goals and objectives to which the human community aspires.

His Royal Highness presented a number of ideas and notions that represent a valuable contribution to efforts aimed at promoting and vitalizing the role of the United Nations. He mentioned the importance of linkage between modernizing the Organization's mechanisms and the nature of the issues it confronts. The effects of these reforms should consider the viability and performance of United Nations bodies in a way that enables the United Nations it to fulfil its required role in dealing effectively with the new developments in modern international relations.

One of the most apparent features of the new world order is the emerging phenomenon of globalization, which, as a developed framework for international relations, has occupied a large portion of the current political thought of nations. We view globalization as a phenomenon that should reflect the natural closeness between nations aimed at achieving social justice, overall development, equality among nations, and broadening the scope of cooperation in a manner that serves the issues of peace and security and stability throughout the world. However, and I read here from a statement by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz at the Millennium Summit:

> "We hope that the United Nations will support us in standing against a globalization that results in the hegemony of the strong over the weak, increases the causes of the oppression and exploitation of nations, and fosters injustice and inequality in international relations. We particularly warn of the ramifications of unbridled globalization and its use as an umbrella to violate the sovereignty of States and interfere with their internal affairs under a variety of pretexts especially from the angle of human rights issues."

The United Nations call for a civilized dialogue and declaring 2001 a year for Dialogue among Civilizations comes at an appropriate time as a civilized response to those who propagate the themes and doctrines of conflict and inevitable clash of civilizations. A dialogue among civilizations represents, in fact, a constructive beginning towards achieving globalization in its positive sense and its human aspect, something to which all peoples and nations aspire. A dialogue among civilizations would contribute to strengthening the values and principles of understanding and cooperation among cultures and civilizations. It will further promote respect for other religious beliefs and the cultural legacies of other nations in a way that consolidates the principles of peaceful coexistence and proliferates the culture of peace and tolerance.

Deviation from the values and principles of justice, equality and non-compliance with the rules of international legitimacy in resolving differences and disputes through peaceful means has led to the proliferation of wars and armed conflicts in many parts of the world. This has caused painful humanitarian suffering that continues to arouse the conscience of the world community. In our region, Israel continues to take intransigent positions and to reject the requirements for peace. This became evident during the recent talks at Camp David where the Israeli side insisted on maintaining positions that are diametrically opposed to the principles of peace that were agreed to in Madrid and to what was stated in United Nations resolutions with respect to the status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Both the final communiqué of the Al-Quds Committee, which convened recently in Agadir, Morocco, and the resolution of the Council of the Arab League, adopted at its 114th session, reaffirmed the unshakeable Arab and Islamic positions with respect to the issue of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. It also reaffirmed the impossibility of attaining a durable and comprehensive peace without reaching a just solution to this problem in a way that preserves Arab and Muslim rights, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, and that respects complete Palestinian sovereignty over Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

Israel is making a big mistake if it believes that the peace process can proceed without total respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to return to their homeland and establish their own independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Al-Quds

Al-Sharif is an integral part of the occupied territories and is subject to Security Council resolution 242 (1967). Moreover, a comprehensive peace cannot be achieved without Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the 4 June 1967 line.

We continue to feel for the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people as a result of the continuing refusal of their Government to abide fully by United Nations resolutions, which would allow for the lifting of the sanctions. In reiterating its concern over the suffering of the Iraqi people, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proposed an initiative that would allow Iraq to import all the materials and goods it needed — except those that fall within the context of military items that threaten Iraq's neighbours. If such an initiative had been accepted, the needs of the Iraqi people would have been met and their suffering alleviated. However, the Iraqi Government was swift in rejecting this gesture, and thus it has prolonged the suffering of the Iraqi people. We once again express the hope that the Iraqi Government will act quickly to comply with Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) and the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and of other international committees concerned with the release and repatriation of all Kuwaiti and Saudi prisoners, as well as with the return of Kuwaiti property. We once again reiterate the need to respect Iraq's independence, unity and territorial integrity.

We also strongly desire the removal of the causes of tension in the Gulf region. Accordingly, we hope that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will cooperate with the efforts of the tripartite committee, which has been entrusted with creating a conducive climate for direct negotiations between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to reach an amicable and acceptable solution to the issue of the three islands.

As regards Somalia, my country welcomed the outcome of the national reconciliation conference, which took place in the town of Arta in Djibouti and which included the election of President Abdikassin Salad Hassan. We hope that the other Somali factions will join the reconciliation efforts aimed at promoting national accord and at achieving unity and stability in Somalia.

In Afghanistan fierce fighting continues and is denying Afghanistan and its people the fruits of liberation from foreign occupation.

The Pakistani-Indian conflict over Jammu and Kashmir remains a source of tension between the two neighbouring countries. We call on both sides to exercise the utmost restraint and to solve the conflict through negotiations, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, which give the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to self-determination.

The continuation of these disputes and armed conflicts — which have claimed the lives of millions, depleted huge quantities of resources and caused destruction and serious damage to the environment — makes it incumbent upon the international community to make every possible effort to put an end to these conflicts and to find peaceful solutions to them. In this regard, we look to the United Nations to make greater efforts to reaffirm its role as a peacemaker and not just a peacekeeper. It has become evident that working to prevent conflicts from erupting is more effective and less costly than concentrating on peacekeeping.

In this respect and in compliance with the principle of resolving conflicts through peaceful means, our region witnessed two important events that marked a positive sign in relations between nations. In June 2000, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Yemen signed the Jeddah agreement establishing final and permanent, international land and sea borders. This ended more than 60 years of border disputes. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also concluded an agreement with the State of Kuwait for the demarcation of the shallow seas adjacent to the former neutral zone between the two countries.

The issue of disarmament is of great concern to my country, and we call for greater efforts in this area, especially as regards weapons of mass destruction. The presence of these weapons represents a great danger to international peace and security. We hope that the nuclear States will fulfil the pledges they made at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and adhere to the commitment to eradicate their nuclear arsenals.

In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is very concerned about Israel's refusal to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and about its decision to keep its nuclear programme outside the scope of international controls. Israel's refusal to adhere to the

international will and to become part of this Treaty has aborted all efforts exerted by the peoples and countries of the Middle East to live in a region free from all weapons of mass destruction. Israel is the only country in the region that has yet to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, a fact that has disrupted the balance of security and threatened peace in the region.

It is this imperative to stress the need to increase the effectiveness of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by making it universal and mandatory.

Cooperation on social and political issues has become a necessity that cannot be avoided or neglected. The economic and social problems of the developing countries make it incumbent upon us all to promote policies that can alleviate the effects of these problems, which in most cases exacerbate tension within and among nations. We believe that the developed countries have an obligation to assist in combating poverty, food scarcities, drought and famine.

It is unrealistic to apply the concept of globalization only as a means to liberalize the markets — removing restrictions — without also drafting a framework for action that stresses the need to consider the economic situation in many of the developing countries and to assist them in moving to a stage where they can participate in development. It is therefore important for the industrialized and technically advanced countries to help those developing nations without subjecting them to selective policies in technology transfer. Moreover, globalization should be a two-way street that requires the developed, industrialized nations to liberalize their markets and open them up to products from developing nations.

We are truly objective when dealing with environmental issues. We support conducting serious and informed studies based on evidence, studies that take into consideration the process of development in the developing countries. In this regard, we call upon all States to abide by Agenda 21 and urge the industrialized States to honour their international commitments regarding the transfer of environmentally friendly technology to the developing countries.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that we are facing enormous challenges in the new era, which makes it incumbent upon all of us to strive to achieve the maximum possible level of cooperation and solidarity. This is not confined to political and military challenges, but also includes new waves of challenges that result from the contemporary way of life with all its problems and complications and cannot be solved or managed except through organized collective efforts. Our firm belief in the important role of the United Nations in dealing with current issues and in facilitating appropriate international cooperation to address and contain these problems, makes us more determined than ever to support this Organization and help consolidate its constructive role.

It is my wish that we enter the new millennium with stronger determination and commitment to our collective goal to establish a secure world where values triumph and justice, equality and peace prevail.

Allah says in the Holy Koran:

> "Help ye one another in righteousness and piety but help ye not one another in sin and rancour." (The Holy Koran, V:2)

May peace and the blessing of Allah be upon you, Sir.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jozias van Aartsen, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Van Aartsen (Netherlands): "We, the peoples" is a powerful rendition of world affairs and a daunting portrait of life for future generations. It took intellect and diplomatic *savoir-faire* to state a complex case in such a concise and forceful way. We are grateful to the Secretary-General and his staff for producing it.

"We, the peoples" are of course the opening words of the Charter, and I want to take them as a point of departure. Other speakers have done so before me and have argued in favour of a more robust structure for keeping the peace in the world community. They are right. The United Nations role in the area of preventing or limiting armed conflict was conceived as its principal purpose. The Brahimi report has shown how, in spite of that, the United Nations peacekeeping function has in fact become its Achilles heel. The Brahimi recommendations deserve to be implemented — the sooner the better. At present, the Netherlands Government and parliament are debating how to improve our national contribution to peacekeeping.

"We, the Peoples" can lead to reflections on a totally different side of the United Nations reality as well. I, for one, would take this opportunity to argue in favour of closer ties between the United Nations and the private sector.

In 1945 the world was run by States. The Charter hinges on that very assumption. It covers all aspects of life as they were prevalent at the time, from peace and security to social justice, from economic cooperation to human rights. Despite its ambition, the Charter hardly mentions any other actors besides States. Non-governmental organizations appear in the Charter only once. The private sector is not referred to at all. In other words, the Charter conforms to a model of governance as old as the Peace of Westphalia, a state system going back to the mid-1600s.

In order to strategize for the future, we need to ask ourselves: who, in actual fact, runs the world today; where and how are world affairs conducted; and how can we position the United Nations accordingly?

The United Nations is made up of Member States. That is fitting and proper. States will be the custodians of foreign relations for a long time to come. But their roles have changed significantly with time. States can no longer be thought of as the hard billiard balls of international relations. Internationalization has altered the concept of sovereignty. Nor are Sates autonomous entities as before, pursuing self-defined national interests. Their actions are now much more shaped by economic pressures, information flows, and population movements. For States, too, globalization is here to stay. Other actors have entered both the domestic and international scenes. Civil society is one. The private sector is another. Since 1945, civil society, made up of non-profit organizations, has blossomed along a wide spectrum, beyond any expectation of the United Nations founding fathers. Many non-governmental organizations operate across national boundaries. At the present time, the United Nations system could never hope to operate properly without the assistance of non-governmental organizations, not to mention normative thinking and advocacy. Non-governmental organizations have acquired access to the United Nations at different levels, and participate in many of its discussions.

Although a potent actor on the domestic and international levels, the private sector has been virtually ignored by traditional United Nations diplomacy. The business community, and notably transnational corporations, were viewed by many as the competitor, if not as the enemy of international public interest. Documents critical of multinationals were being issued by the United Nations and the specialized agencies until recently. Confrontation rather than dialogue. I am not contending that there were no grounds for that position: quite the contrary. However, nowadays we see a growing awareness in the business community of the necessity of responsible corporate policies and of a role for private enterprise in the pursuit of interests that go beyond maximizing immediate profits. As an example, I refer to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, in which the pharmaceutical industry closely cooperates with international organizations, Governments and other actors.

We need to build on that. Indeed, the time has come to expand the concept of a partnership with the private sector. Why? Two reasons. First of all, the world is up against incredible odds and, secondly, the private sector does exist and wields a lot of power in the international arena.

About the odds: take a sustainable future, where elementary laws of ecology must be respected. Not even the most powerful Government can put a stop to global warming — nor all the Member States of the United Nations combined. A sustainable future needs to be pursued in conjunction with industry, civil society and the scientific community. For equitable working conditions, and other forms of social justice, States need to involve the private sector. The same is true for fighting corruption, the spread of small arms, wasting water or AIDS.

We have truly entered an era that is very different from the one in which the United Nations was born — an era in which the course of humanity and the quality of life on earth have more and more become a shared responsibility; an era where Governments, the private sector and civil society are drawn ever more closely together. They all have a stake in global governance. The so-called global public goods are a matter for all of them together.

The private sector has a stake in the future of the planet, too. Of course, it is here to do business. But no planet, no profit. Companies should find it in their own interest to assume a responsibility equal to their weight in international relations and the influence they have at

the domestic level. Chief executive officers, too, want a livable world for their grandchildren. The private sector must be called upon to enter into a responsible corporate partnership in sync with other actors at the international plane. True, the role of each actor needs to be different. Their motivation can remain different, too — as does the legal basis on which they act. But their determination needs to be the same: the determination to secure the longevity of life as we know it and to secure for everyone on the planet an equitable share of its bounty.

Different roles, shared responsibility. That concept needs to take root in this Organization as well. The United Nations cannot credibly hope to play a galvanizing role in meeting the challenges of the coming century if it cannot show that its debates and its action platforms reflect the real world outside the conference rooms. If we want to see the United Nations as "unique in world affairs" — as the Millennium report puts it — it must be able to show that all players are on the stage.

The Secretary-General's Global Compact could not have come at a more opportune moment. It is the mere beginning of a process, but it is off to a promising start. The Global Compact deserves the active support of the international community, and it deserves to be joined by other multinationals. I do understand the trepidations of some non-governmental organizations who fear that multinational corporations will drape themselves in the United Nations flag and become untouchable in the pursuit of profit. I understand, too, the apprehension felt by diplomats in this hall, who have a lifetime invested in the exclusivity of the State and its monopoly on multilateral discourse. But the Global Compact is not a Trojan horse.

And I will go even further. We have given civil society structural access to the United Nations system. By contrast, the access we are giving to the private sector, with the notable exception of the International Labour Organization, has been ad hoc, not structural. In the future, we must create appropriate channels of communication with the private sector, inside this Organization, where they, as well as Governments and civil society, can try and get a hold on the convulsions of our time — a forum where, at the very least, they can deliberate and begin to break down the barriers of mistrust that have divided them for so long.

That is the first reason why the United Nations needs to broaden its scope and become more inclusive. The second is the power of the private sector. Many companies have turnovers larger than the national budgets of some Member States, and the same is true for the personal fortunes of some chief executive officers. The relationship between States and the private sector has altered dramatically over time. States were once thought of as bulwarks against harmful economic impact from abroad. Economic weight was viewed as a trump card in the power play among nations. Today, States are increasingly serving as instruments for adjusting domestic policy to the realities of the present-day world economy. They have become intermediaries between the world economy, with its own structure of power, and domestic societies.

This brings up the question of where world affairs are being conducted and how they have caused a shift in the style of diplomacy. Economic globalization has shifted the focus of attention to forums other than the United Nations here in New York, notably to the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and, on a regional level, the European Union. Policies are tested in the margins of the World Economic Forum in Davos or decided elsewhere. Brussels has become a hub of world affairs. That focus has brought on a different cast of players than in the days of Talleyrand and Metternich. Foreign Ministers now work shoulder to shoulder not only with development ministers, but also with finance and trade ministers, as well as with central bankers. International affairs, whether we like it or not, are increasingly about economics.

Forging a relationship with the private sector is therefore indispensable if the United Nations wants to preserve its relevance over the long haul. The multilateral system, for its part, must seek closer ties with other centres of power and with the business community. Mr. Kofi Annan has been vigorously pursuing closer relations with all these various forums, and we encourage him to do more of the same.

Responsible corporate partnership is also about protecting the weak. The United Nations was set up not only to guarantee peace and security, but also to secure freedom from want. Despite its obvious advantages, globalization is leaving too many victims by the wayside. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, and the poor suffer the most, in war and in peace. Meanwhile, the private sector wields

a great deal of power in its decisions as to where it will buy, sell and invest. Those decisions may bear directly on the quality of life in many developing countries.

Even though the odds are staggering, the United Nations system can make a difference in reducing poverty, gender inequality and child and maternal mortality. But it can make a difference only from a position of strength and from a platform shared by other actors at the international level: from a position of shared responsibility. The Millennium Summit has declared poverty eradication the United Nations number one priority. We applaud that. But fighting poverty is not only a moral imperative, as it always has been; it has also become an economic one. That is another reason for the United Nations to become more inclusive of the private sector.

The Secretary-General's report (A/54/2000), "We the peoples", duly poses the question of how to take the United Nations forward. Whatever the way forward, it needs to be a bold one. For too long we have been remoulding old ideas. While doing so, we have kept the United Nations on a very short leash, hardly allowing it to stray off the beaten path. More of the same is not enough. In other words, the United Nations is bound to miss its cue if we, the peoples, pursue our business as usual. The future will pass us by.

The alternative is an avenue that is much more ambitious. It amounts to using the United Nations system as a vehicle for the development of a new vision of world politics, a vision for the "post-Westphalian" era. In such a vision, present trends would be given legitimacy and a conceptual framework. In such a vision, the principle of non-intervention yields to the defence of human rights; sovereignty is further reappraised; there is room for civil society and the private sector; and economics are also held responsible for social and development goals. Such is the road less travelled, but the only one that can make all the difference.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Belkhadem, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria.

Mr. Belkhadem (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like first of all, on my own behalf and that of the Algerian delegation, to convey to Mr. Holkeri heartfelt congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. I wish him every success in discharging his noble duties. The choice of Mr. Holkeri as President is a tribute to his personal qualities and to the experience of his country, Finland, with which we enjoy a firm friendship.

I should also like to take this opportunity to convey to his predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Foreign Minister of Namibia, our deep appreciation and gratitude for the great effort he made during his presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

Finally, I should like to salute the spirit of initiative and commitment shown by our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, the head of the Secretariat, and commend his sincere and tireless work to reform the Organization and to give it a new dynamism so as to prepare it to meet the challenge of the enormous changes in international relations.

I should also like to welcome the State of Tuvalu as a new Member of our Organization.

Just a few days ago, the United Nations hosted a political event that was without precedent since the Organization was created: the Millennium Summit. Because of a host of fast-paced developments that occurred in international relations, we, the peoples of the United Nations, must take time at this juncture of history to organize a dialogue to discuss the shape of the new emerging world order and the effects on us, the peoples, the States and the United Nations, the repository of our collective hopes and aspirations.

The world has changed in a very short time from a system with clearly defined parameters to a system where political and economic reference points are sorely lacking. It is a system defined by nebulous phenomena, which evolve according to rules set by forces that refuse, in the name of globalization, to accept any form of guidance or collective democratic oversight. It is no surprise that globalization is increasing the suspicions and fears of the developing countries vis-à-vis the evolving new world order. The current state of international relations, marked by injustice and imbalance, will inevitably get worse because of the unbridled process of globalization.

It is because of this that the Millennium Summit forcefully proclaimed the need to reinvigorate the United Nations and to galvanize its role, since it is the

refuge of the weak and the marginalized. The massive presence of the leaders of the whole world at the Summit was irrefutable proof of the commitment of the peoples and nations of the world to the United Nations and to the principles and purposes it embodies. The United Nations is the only forum built on the ideals and reference points shared by mankind as a whole, marked by universality and globality in its missions and prerogatives.

Certainly the United Nations is facing today new challenges caused by rapid, profound and sometimes surprising changes in international affairs. No one denies the fact that it needs to be radically reformed in order to prepare it and adapt it effectively to meet current and future challenges and to manage and redress the contradictions of international relations.

Security Council reform and expansion of its membership are urgent matters, because this important body clearly lacks the necessary representativity to give legitimacy and efficiency to its decisions and actions.

Likewise, consolidation of democracy and international relations, if it is to be truly meaningful, must involve the enhancement of the General Assembly and the establishment of its role as the principal source of international law, as well as oversight over the three principal organs, in keeping with the United Nations Charter. Accordingly, marginalization of the Assembly, when it comes to major questions such as the maintenance of international peace and security, does not in any way allow the overwhelming majority of nations to contribute to the decision-making process in international affairs.

Opening the United Nations to the outside world is a necessity dictated by changes in the international community and the demands of our times. By involving civil society in its work, the United Nations will benefit from the considerable contribution that non-governmental partners can provide in meeting the needs of countries in matters of development, particularly in the areas of education, health and housing. But this partnership cannot be at the expense of the purposes and principles of the United Nations, nor the independence of its decisions.

It is in the context of this vision that we state our position on humanitarian intervention. For us it is a question not of whether or not it is acceptable to intervene in humanitarian disasters, but, rather, of legal and political parameters that should govern any decision on this matter. We therefore demand that terms of reference be clearly and precisely established, that they should be democratically adopted in a context of transparency and that they should effectively reflect the will of the community of nations. They must be based on principles of solidarity and justice, ruling out any forms of selectivity, special treatment or double standards.

Experience has shown that the international community has found in the United Nations a framework that allows for considerable progress to be made with regard to security and cooperation. In the area of disarmament, for example, thanks to the available frameworks for negotiation and dialogue, the Organization has been able to realize considerable achievements, such as the signing of many conventions on weapons of mass destruction and the success of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), presided over by Algeria.

The United Nations has also provided a framework to coordinate international efforts to deal with new dangers that pose a threat to international peace and security, such as terrorism, organized crime, and drug and arms trafficking. On the subject of terrorism, the international community has embarked on a process of implementing its strategy to combat this scourge and to prevent it. The United Nations and regional groups have adopted legal instruments that supplement international laws dealing with anti-terrorist actions. We hope that these achievements will be enhanced by the adoption of a comprehensive international convention, to be considered a political, legal and moral international covenant, to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Algeria is keen that its relations within its political and geographical spheres be governed by a vision of the future that goes beyond short-term interactions or ephemeral motives. In our policy towards the peoples and countries with which we have relations of neighbourliness, geography and common heritage, we want to consolidate the principle of dialogue and consultation and develop cooperation and solidarity in keeping with the demands of good neighbourliness, common destiny, mutual interest, mutual trust and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

Regarding the Arab Maghreb region, Algeria's commitment to build a unified, stable and prosperous Maghreb is based on our conviction that Maghreb unity is a strategic option dictated by the aspirations of the peoples of the region and by the current international situation, which encourages integration and the formation of blocs. Algeria is prepared today to work with its Maghreb partners to reactivate the process on the basis of an objective thorough analysis of common Maghreb action according to a rigorous and pragmatic methodology that seeks to maximize the complementarities of the countries of the region and that ensures gradual integration, taking into account the principles of equity and balance of interests.

It is on the basis of this vision that Algeria has spared no effort to help find a just and lasting solution to the problem of Western Sahara. Algeria's support for the United Nations settlement plan is based on our commitment to preserve the security and stability of the region, without, however, rejecting the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination. The settlement plan, which was supported by both sides — Morocco and the POLISARIO Front — and by the international community, remains the practical, realistic option that will guarantee a just and lasting solution to this issue. Today the settlement plan is at a delicate stage, and the international community, which has already made a considerable effort to implement it, must give it even more attention and more support. Thanks to the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker, and the cooperation of both sides, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has resolved the difficulties that for so long prevented implementation of the plan. Today, there is no reason to delay or to block the referendum process.

My country is convinced of the interdependence of the interests of the States and peoples on both shores of the Mediterranean Sea. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to the Euro-Mediterranean process, which provides a promising framework for the promotion of dialogue and consultation among the countries of the region and opens up great prospects for understanding, intercultural exchange and improvement of partnership for the benefit of all peoples.

The Middle East region has seen some developments this year that have had an important impact on the peace process. The question of Palestine, which is at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is at a delicate stage. That means that the international community must mobilize even further in order to move the peace talks forward. Algeria reiterates its support for the Palestinian people and salutes their struggle for recovering their legitimate rights, including the right to establish their own independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

Algeria would also like to reaffirm its support for the fraternal Syrian people and its right to recover the occupied Golan.

We express our profound satisfaction and pride at Lebanon's regaining its sovereignty over all its territory.

Algeria once again reaffirms the need to lift the embargo that has hit the fraternal Iraqi people so hard.

We also call for a final lifting of the sanctions that continue to penalize the fraternal peoples of Libya and the Sudan.

Africa is undergoing profound changes that are opening up new vistas for the peoples and countries of that continent. Those changes have been brought about by the serious and determined will of Africans to free themselves from the burdens of the past and by their aspiration to join in the process of change that is sweeping our world today. Democracy is gaining ground daily as the mode of governance for the vast majority of societies in Africa. The State of law and respect for human rights are becoming embedded in African societies. That tendency is strikingly reflected in the historic decision by the 1999 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government no longer to recognize any anti-constitutional changes. That was a promising sign for the establishment of a democratic culture in Africa.

At the economic level, African countries have wasted no time in joining the world trend towards a market economy and in creating the necessary conditions to promote free trade and investment.

With regard to the conflicts that have devastated the continent and continue to cause humanitarian disasters and to tarnish Africa's prestige, the continent's leaders are now using preventive diplomacy and their own skills in mediating and settling conflict. Along the same lines, the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is being reinforced as the authority of reference to provide a framework for dialogue and conflict

prevention. As a result of those efforts, we see signs of easing in various conflicts in some parts of Africa. Through its chairmanship of the OAU last year, my country made great efforts to resolve some of those conflicts and to limit their scale.

Algeria's efforts were successful in the case of the conflict between two neighbours, Ethiopia and Eritrea, where the Algiers Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities doused the fire of that destructive war between two fraternal peoples. The Agreement now offers real prospects for a just and lasting settlement of the border dispute between the two countries.

Algeria has also stepped up its initiatives to end the conflict in the sisterly nation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In coordination and consultation with the countries of the region concerned and with the United Nations, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has intensified his efforts with the parties, urging them to find a peaceful and negotiated solution in order to spare the peoples of that country any further suffering and preserve its unity and territorial integrity. Today, more than a year since the Lusaka Agreement, we can only view with regret the reversals that have taken place in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those setbacks have led to a deferment by the United Nations of the deployment of its peacekeeping mission.

UNITA's continued defiance of the international community in Angola and its failure to comply with the commitments it made in the peace process continue to inflict the disastrous consequences of an endless war on the people of Angola. While reaffirming UNITA's responsibility for the ongoing war in that country, we note with satisfaction the new effectiveness of sanctions on that rebel group. We reiterate the need for complete compliance by any means necessary to make the rebel elements comply with international law and honour their commitments under the Lusaka Agreement.

The solidarity expressed by the international community for the efforts of the leaders of Sierra Leone to restore peace and security must be accompanied by a tough attitude towards the criminal elements guilty of murder and despicable acts against civilians. Those acts have not spared even members of the United Nations Mission.

While we reaffirm the fundamental role of the United Nations and the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, we continue to stress the need for the Security Council to demonstrate the same effectiveness and speed of action with regard to conflicts in Africa as it does in connection with conflicts in other regions of the world. In that regard, I would like to express our desire that the General Assembly give the necessary attention and in-depth consideration to the Brahimi report's recommendations on peacekeeping operations, and that it implement those recommendations so as to make the United Nations more effective in this essential area of maintaining international peace and security.

The contrasts that exist in today's world can be seen very clearly in the economic and social situation of the world. Humanity has never before achieved such a level of technological development. That development now makes it possible to meet basic human needs economically, socially and culturally. However, some segments of humanity continue to suffer the most abject forms of poverty and destitution. The Secretary-General's report to the Millennium Summit contains a clear formulation of those contradictions, which do us no credit as a civilized society that aspires to preserve human dignity and to protect the rights of those whose rights have been wrested from them.

Mr. Kofi Annan also recognized in his report that the benefits of globalization remain limited to a small group of people. That fact reinforces our conviction of the need to accelerate the restructuring of international relations and our insistence on the need for a serious and comprehensive dialogue between the North and the South to find solutions for the imbalances that exist in the international financial and trade systems.

It is time to tackle international economic relations from the standpoint of humankind's needs and dignity rather than from the standpoint of market forces alone, because experience has proved that such forces do not accord the necessary importance to social issues. If there is one area in which we must translate into reality the values of solidarity upon which the United Nations was founded and the interdependence which marks international relations, it is that of combating poverty, ignorance and epidemics.

Effective and unified tackling of the problem of sustainable development in the third world necessarily entails settling the problem of debt, reviving cooperation for development, promoting investments

and opening up the markets of the North to the products and commodities of the South.

We are meeting today for the last session of the General Assembly in our century, which has been marked by many events, a century in which the horror of destructive wars was mingled with the joy of peace and détente, a century marked by a struggle between hope and resignation, where it became evident that people are at once capable of the most abject acts and the most useful kinds of actions.

We leave behind a century and usher in another, hopeful that humankind will learn from the past and will demonstrate the necessary determination to avoid making the same mistakes, for which we have paid such a high price.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Roberto Rojas López, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica.

Mr. Rojas López (Costa Rica) *(spoke in Spanish)*: Allow me at the outset to congratulate Mr. Harri Holkeri on his well-deserved election to preside over the work of the General Assembly, which attests both to his outstanding personal qualities and to the admiration that the international community has for his country, Finland. Allow me also to express our gratitude to the outgoing President, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Namibia, for his excellent work.

Just a week ago, in this same Hall, our heads of State or Government held the Millennium Summit. That historic event served as the framework for an in-depth consideration of the role of the United Nations in the next century and for the reiteration, at the highest political level, of the universal support for this Organization.

It is now up to us to elaborate on our leaders' observations and determine what is necessary to build a more prosperous future, a more just society and an increasingly human civilization.

At the outset of the new millennium, scientific and technological achievements in all fields are allowing us to glimpse an ever-brighter future. However, a double threat exists to progress towards that goal. On one hand, it is endangered by uneven growth, which threatens to deepen the divide between the wealthiest and the poorest. More effective measures must be adopted to create a more just and equitable society and international community.

On the other hand, the future is also threatened by the temptation of absolute materialism, which can be understood as the danger of reducing development to the mere satisfaction of material needs. The risk of transforming the human being into a commodity and the temptation to seek wealth instead of happiness represent a continuing threat. We must establish a new society whose goal should be the promotion of the well-being of all, as reflected in their full physical, intellectual and spiritual development. We must create a society centred on ideas, creativity and abilities, and not on power or wealth.

The United Nations can and should play a central role in the construction of this new society. However, we must note, honestly and courageously, that so far the United Nations and the international community as a whole have been held back by innumerable constraints and restrictions and known many failures.

More than 50 years ago, at the founding of this Organization, we committed ourselves to eradicating the scourge of war, and we undertook to promote social progress and better living conditions for all.

Unfortunately, though, to date, the United Nations has been unable to respond fully to these pleas. We react to political and military crises with hollow statements to the press. We condemn gross violations of human rights with procedural resolutions, which are then forgotten on our shelves. We create organs, committees and tribunals without any real capacity for action and lacking the necessary resources to fulfil their mandates. We convene summits, conferences and meetings that limit themselves to repeating empty declarations and passing commitments. We send military observers who are unable to maintain peace because we do not provide them with the necessary resources or political support. Over and over again we adopt inadequate measures to resolve crises, hoping that they will perform miracles. We send international experts with development programmes that respond neither to the needs nor the desires of their recipients. This Organization has imposed sanctions that affect innocent civilians while at the same time inadvertently strengthening criminal regimes.

We recognize, of course, that many of the United Nations activities have been successful and praiseworthy. We cannot overlook the work of the

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in favour of victims of war and of children, nor can we forget the heroic sacrifice of many Blue Helmets and humanitarian personnel. We must always keep in mind the valuable mediation efforts and good offices provided to defuse armed conflicts. We must learn from those peacekeeping operations that have been crowned with success in spite of all of the difficulties. We must recall and respect the gradual codification of human rights and of the need to provide the highest possible standards of living.

But the world expects greater leadership from the United Nations. The world's peoples are calling for firm and decisive action on the part of the international community. Humanity is looking to us to fulfil the lofty goals that we set for ourselves when we founded this Organization.

For these reasons, new bases must be established for the actions of the United Nations. The Organization must be provided with a renewed political and philosophical paradigm that will enable it to garner the political and material support it needs from all States in order effectively to achieve its goals.

Today the United Nations requires all of our support. Each one of us is obliged, individually and collectively, to provide the best living conditions possible to all our fellow citizens.

The primary objective of the United Nations in the twenty-first century must be to promote full respect for human rights. More than 50 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the continuing violation of those rights, through inexcusable killings for political, religious or ethnic motives and through the displacement of millions of refugees and internally displaced persons, is a matter for profound concern. We are distressed also by the fact that thousands perish daily of starvation or easily curable diseases. We are concerned at the fact that thousands of persons are still persecuted or incarcerated because of their political opinions and that for those reasons hundreds are subject to the most degrading torture or are forced to live in extreme poverty.

The persistence of war is the cause of inexcusable atrocities and recurrent humanitarian crisis. The true victims of war are not the fallen soldiers but the displaced or refugee children and elderly, the women who are raped, the young people who are murdered, the mothers who lose their incomes, the innocent workers whose workplaces are destroyed, the students whose schools are bombed, the sick who cannot go to hospital because there are no bridges and no medicines. In the contemporary world, every armed conflict, every civil war, every massive violation of human rights, every humanitarian emergency, caused either by man or by nature, calls for coordinated international action through this Organization.

In that context, all States must politically and financially support United Nations activities to eradicate the scourge of war. The Organization must regain leadership in maintaining international peace and security. It is imperative that all States strictly adhere to the prohibition of the use of force.

For those reasons, one of our tasks is to revitalize the Security Council in order to increase its legitimacy and its capacity for action. That organ should never transfer, abandon or renounce its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. To the contrary, it is essential to ensure that it can perform its functions satisfactorily by providing it with the necessary resources and political support.

The Security Council cannot renounce its role simply because it is unable to find a quick or inexpensive solution to a crisis. We cannot accept the establishment of peacekeeping operations that lack personnel and resources to the point of being irrelevant. Nor can we accept the dispatch of personnel who lack training or motivation and who become easy victims of conflicts. By no means can we consent to the imposition of sanctions regimes that affect innocent populations. When establishing a peacekeeping mission, the Security Council must define realistic goals, so that mandates and resources will be commensurate with the actual requirements of the crisis it is to face.

Armed conflicts and political crises are multifaceted phenomena. Every emergency situation presents a series of political, military and economic problems. True peace can be attained only when all individuals enjoy proper living conditions, when they possess a sufficiently high level of economic development to meet their basic needs, when their fundamental human rights are respected and when their interests and individual rights are guaranteed by democratic means.

True peace requires a culture and a climate that foster mutual respect and that categorically reject violence. In order to achieve peace, we must create a culture of peace. With a view to creating such a culture of peace, the United Nations must promote not only peace but also social justice, democracy and development. This should actively involve the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme. We advocate in particular the strengthening of the role of the Economic and Social Council so that it can effectively monitor and coordinate the implementation of the economic, social, cultural and environmental activities of the United Nations and of all its organs.

In this regard, international cooperation plays a central role in supporting local initiatives for development, democratization and the promotion of human rights. Unfortunately, we are witnessing a decrease in international assistance in these fields while the demand continues to grow. To address this situation, each nation has to take into its own hands the task of creating the conditions necessary to attain peace, development and justice.

We believe that only if human rights are fully respected will it be possible to create and sustain the conditions necessary for the full development of all men and women. The promotion of democracy and social and economic development are also indispensable instruments to generate the material, social and spiritual conditions required for this comprehensive development.

Our experience has taught us that only democracy can provide the necessary framework for the full respect of human rights. Only democracy which grants all citizens equal rights and opportunities to participate in the political process can secure true peace. Only a democratic system which bestows on all people equal opportunities to enjoy the benefits of economic development and personal accomplishment will make possible sustainable and just development. For that reason, we celebrate the democratic consolidation that, thanks to recent elections after a long period under the same ruling party, is being enjoyed by Mexico and by the Republic of China in Taiwan — which deserves an appropriate place in international forums.

Additionally, our own national evolution has taught us that the first step in such a policy is the elimination or reduction of military budgets. Costa Rica abolished its army more than 50 years ago and has since been free from armed conflict with its neighbours and from military oppression of its population. Reduction of military expenditure is especially valuable for developing States whose resources are limited and cannot be mismanaged. In that context, armies are a heavy burden on national budgets and a constant source of tension and repression. Would it not be better to devote to health the $191 billion that developing countries waste on their armed forces? Would it not be preferable to allocate to education the $22 billion dollars that are spent in arms transfers to the third world? Our historical experience has made us a witness to and an example of the multifaceted and positive relationship between disarmament and development.

The second step on the path to peace and development is to devote as many resources as possible to education and health. Only an educated people can live in freedom; only a healthy people can work for development; only a cultured people can be a part of the contemporary globalized world. For those reasons, we must invest intensively and systematically in our human resources while also striving for economic development, social justice and the institutionalization of democracy.

The third step towards the future is to secure respect for human rights and democracy to enable peoples to choose freely their own destinies and to facilitate the coordination of all of society's actors. In my country, we have deeply committed ourselves to those principles, both in the national sphere through constitutional provisions, and in the international arena through various international conventions and treaties.

In this regard, the issue of migrations is of the greatest importance to my country. Costa Rica has given emphasis to the need to relocate the nationals of each country peacefully and in an orderly fashion to satisfy their specific immigration and emigration needs; to the movements of qualified human resources to promote economic, social and cultural progress in the receiving countries; and to the orderly reintegration and resettlement of persons who, for one reason or another, have been obliged to abandon their country or place of origin or who have been forced to leave a nation that did not allow them to exercise their right

not to emigrate. Therefore, we appreciate the key role played by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and we advocate in particular that States that have not yet done so make the necessary amendments to their domestic legislation in order to guarantee this right to all human beings.

There are three main elements in the process of development that we believe require greater attention. First, we should reconstruct society and its values, especially through a renewed effort to acknowledge and protect the value of the family in its role as society's basic cell. Unfortunately, the family is the first victim of political and economic crisis, thus forcing its dissolution by the scattering of its members. For this reason, we must emphasize that families are the schools where the basic values of coexistence and respect for the dignity of all other persons are taught, and that, without them, it is impossible to create a stable society.

Secondly, it is necessary to make greater efforts to pursue sustainable development in all areas of human endeavour. In this sense, we are pleased to report that Costa Rica has achieved significant advances in the environmental field regarding the preservation of its rich biodiversity and the promotion of development in harmony with nature. We are one of the first nations to have undertaken carbon fixation and the sale of oxygen as an additional source of income for development, on the basis of the sustainable use of our forests and recognition of the economic value of the environmental services that they provide to all humanity. In the same vein, we have incorporated the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol into our domestic legal system. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go towards fully sustainable development.

Similarly, Costa Rica is honoured to be the headquarters of the Earth Council and the University for Peace, which are working jointly to promote a concept of development in greater harmony with the environment. We are confident that the University for Peace, in particular, can play a constructive role both in the promotion of sustainable development as in the creation of a culture of peace. Thanks to the work of its new Council and in particular Mr. Maurice Strong, who presides over it, that institution can count on my Government's unwavering support.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our pledge to offer our country as the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. We are confident that this new organ will finally secure the international community's coordinated and comprehensive action with respect to forests.

Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure that economic development is sustainable. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to modify the international economic order, with a view to making it more just and balanced, so that it can grant to the smaller developing countries greater access to the benefits of the globalization process and the opportunities for development that it creates. Open commercial mechanisms enabling commerce and investment to be engines for economic growth should be established. In a parallel, we should target our developmental policies towards more efficient use of the digital revolution, which provides us with many opportunities to compete in the global market and to increase our production. In short, we must democratize globalization.

We believe that knowledge and opportunities to access information and the new technologies are essential today to generate well-being. In today's world, marked by new technological frontiers, our endeavours should also be directed towards narrowing the digital divide. We should seek to provide more just and equitable access to the opportunities open to us in order to transform economic and social activities. In accordance with this thesis, Costa Rica recently initiated the programme "Communications without frontiers", becoming the first nation to provide free e-mail to all its population.

Democracy, sustainable development and human rights constitute the three fundamental elements upon which the United Nations action must be based, as well as that of each of our nations. None is an end in itself; rather they are only a means to secure better living conditions for all people. The true goal of our action centres on the human being; it is to guarantee greater happiness for all persons, the greatest respect for their dignity and the necessary conditions for their full physical, intellectual and spiritual development.

The Acting President *(spoke in French)*: I call next on His Excellency, Mr. Petre Roman, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Roman (Romania) *(spoke in Spanish)*: I am delighted to extend to Mr. Harri Holkeri, the new

President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, my sincere congratulations on his election.

I warmly welcome Tuvalu, the latest newcomer to the United Nations family.

I cannot continue without expressing my sincere appreciation to our dedicated Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, under whose leadership the winds of change keep on blowing.

I hail the results of the Millennium Summit. The views expressed by leaders from all over the world have shown how crucial it is, at this point in history, to reshape our Organization so as to respond adequately to the great challenges of our times.

From this rostrum, and in other forums, political leaders have endeavoured to describe their perceptions, expectations and concerns with regard to the all-encompassing manifestations of globalization. Last year, my predecessor stated that the United Nations was all about institutionalized solidarity. Bearing this idea in mind, we are convinced that the United Nations should reshape its role in such a way as to manage globalization in the interest of all nations and to correct its excesses.

Globalization creates opportunities for commercial, economic and financial expansion. However, improved technological competitiveness and wider economic freedom do not automatically produce greater equity.

The contribution of globalization to the betterment of the human condition will remain limited to a small number of individuals, social categories and countries unless it is oriented towards the common good. This implies that, in the new context of integration and participation in the globalization processes, good governance should intelligently and predictably combine economic reforms with social responsibility, adjust the system of education and professional training, and initiate institutional reforms that are able to achieve long-term internal stability and employment, individual security and social justice, and the protection of national economic interests, resources and the environment.

The process of globalization creates a new balance of power between States, non-governmental organizations and transnational corporations. What is in question today is how to use their potential in order to influence the course of globalization so that it can have a much more positive impact on people's lives. This means bringing globalization closer to the people by promoting human values and democratic principles and practices; an open, inclusive and pluralistic political culture; economies that sustain a decent life for all citizens and prosperity for societies as a whole; and institutions that protect both individuals, with all their rights and fundamental freedoms, and the common good. Nothing can really benefit the citizens of a country if, at the same time, it prejudices the prevailing international standards of a democratic world.

(spoke in French)

We need to pool our efforts in order to enlarge the system of values shared by the international community. In this globalized yet conflictual world, the manifestation of solidarity can provide a sound basis for progress and prosperity for individuals and nations. From this perspective, I am convinced that solidarity in the creation and allocation of educational capital is essential for the access of young people to the opportunities for progress engendered by globalization. I strongly support better access for young people to the new technologies based on information and communication through investments in informatics education, based on firm partnerships among Governments, business communities and non-governmental organizations. In coping with the new informatics reality of globalization, good governance has to act with vision, responsibility and solidarity. Access to educational capital in computer sciences should not create new demarcation lines across the planet, but rather should unite the world, primarily young people, by providing new opportunities for progress, communication and professional success. Access to digital education will also mean civic emancipation, greater transparency and less corruption.

The first key word — solidarity — that I have tried to illustrate should be accompanied by a second: responsibility. For the United Nations as a whole and for its Member States, responsibility is another way to react to the forces of globalization, both domestically and internationally. That is why Romania welcomes the set of priorities and recommendations formulated by the Secretary-General in his report to the Millennium Assembly.

Member States know that responsibility requires them to give the Organization — in what I would call a

"peace ritual" — the political support and concrete means necessary to improve the management of globalization and to fulfil its mandate. This role is not an easy one. In an era of the most advanced technological capabilities, poverty continues to be a painful reality. While there is increasing acceptance of the universality of human rights, innocent people continue to fall victim to inter-ethnic wars. In fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime, States find that the perpetrators are as well-armed as their police forces. The lack of determination or promptness in preventing the degradation of the environment endangers life on our planet. The United Nations must strive to give globalization a human face.

Within our own Organization, responsibility also means that we have to strengthen the authority of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security; pursue the process of reforming the Security Council, once we have agreed that an increase in its membership is justified; be more effective in assisting Member States to cope with their serious economic and social problems; and enhance the Organization's capacity to mount and deploy peace missions on a timely basis.

In recent years, we have witnessed the increasing role of non-governmental organizations and other non-state actors, in particular the powerful transnational corporations. There is a need for them to assume increased responsibility as well. Non-governmental organizations should be prepared to mobilize more effectively the resources of civil society in the service of the public well-being.

As for the transnational corporations, we are aware of their role in stimulating the forces of globalization and also in reaping its fruit. It is only fair for them to assume responsibilities beyond the borders of their profit. There is a long way to go, so it is high time to set out in this particular direction.

The Global Compact initiative launched by the Secretary-General should be built upon. In Romania, we have already explored its potential and the results are promising. We believe, indeed, that the business community can enhance support and enact a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards and environmental protection. After all, profit is meaningless if it does not lead to the improvement of the human condition for all.

(spoke in English)

We believe that all Member States, including Romania, can assume a share of the collective responsibility. Indeed, my country is doing its best to make its own contribution to the goals and purposes of the United Nations. First, Romania is party to the majority of the key multilateral treaties and conventions identified as such by the Secretary-General in the context of the Millennium Summit.

Secondly, we submitted a valuable resolution, entitled "Promoting and consolidating democracy", that was adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on 25 April this year. Encouraged by its success, we will invite the General Assembly to adopt this resolution at the current session. We are convinced that all members of the General Assembly are prepared to reiterate their recognition of the values, principles and practices that give meaning to a democratic society.

Thirdly, Romania is a strong supporter of the United Nations role in peacekeeping. Our peacekeepers have served in various places where we had no specific national interest other than maintaining peace on behalf of the world and of the innocent people who make up the majority of victims of conflicts and disputes. We have worked hard to diversify our contribution to peacekeeping. Romania is also proud to be part of the first Multinational Stand-by Forces High-Readiness Brigade. That is a clear way of expressing support for enhancing the United Nations capacity to deploy peacekeepers rapidly and effectively. In the same context, we welcome the work of the Panel on United Nations peace operations, which has provided a convincing outline for an important reform of this particular function.

Fourthly, we also believe that the time has come for us to try to review the peacekeeping scale of assessments. As a concrete contribution to this effort, I take this opportunity to announce that Romania is willing to gradually move from Group C to Group B of the assessment mechanism for peacekeeping. We appeal to all Member countries to work together to put an end to the current financial crisis.

Fifthly, in the same vein, let me emphasize that Romania has increased its voluntary contribution to the United Nations Development Programme's work in our country. This is one way of reiterating our support for and interest in the operational activities of the United Nations.

We have always supported creative and efficient forms of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. I am pleased to announce to this audience that Romania is preparing to take over the high responsibility of the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2001. We will work hard to make OSCE a more instrumental organization, based upon a specific commitment to improving the life of the citizens of its 54 participating States. At the same time, we will use to its best the potential for dialogue and cooperation between OSCE and the United Nations in conflict-prevention and crisis management, in strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law, in fighting corruption and in other realms of common interest.

Having said this, I would make a plea to Member States to integrate the two essential ingredients for effective action, namely solidarity and responsibility, into the concept of total diplomacy. This means the systematic use of firm and efficient diplomacy that should be called upon before any dangerous tensions burst into conflict. It also means that we should give absolute priority to diplomacy, prevention and containment, and in all circumstances use them extensively and comprehensively for the pacific settlements of disputes. All of the means provided for in Chapter VI of the Charter and others that might be created through our collective effort of imagination should reinforce the Organization's capacity to cope with threats and conflicts, whether predictable or unpredictable.

Recent developments in longstanding conflicts and disputes confirm that at the end of any road paved with a heavy toll in human lives, material destruction and distorted mentalities, one can find a negotiating table. Diplomacy, if used up to the point of exhaustion, can eventually prove decisive, provided all the possibilities of statesmen, professional negotiators, public opinion and civil society are comprehensively mobilized. Intense dialogue, diplomacy and flexibility from all parties are still needed in critical points of the world, such as Kosovo. Resolution 1244 (1999) of the Security Council is a remarkable innovation, which combines the specific capabilities of the United Nations and some prominent regional organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe. Let us work together, guided by resolution 1244, to use the diplomatic and material potential of these organizations with full positive impact on all the inhabitants of this province, irrespective of ethnic background or religion.

I address the same appeal to responsibility to the parties involved in the Transdneister tension problem, with the hope that the commitments assumed during the OSCE Summit in Istanbul will be respected, so that next year we will see concrete measures in the withdrawal of military troops and arms from this part of the Republic of Moldova.

We are aware that there are many complex and unsolved situations for which energetic enforcement is needed. We are ready to participate in a profound and responsible debate on humanitarian intervention. We would join other delegations in taking a fresh look at the use of sanctions and seeing how effective they are with respect to their target and what are the consequences on the innocent civilian population or third countries.

Among the possible consequences, it is worth mentioning the irrational retaliation reactions from countries concerned. A case in point is the perpetuation of the blocking of the Danube — the blocking of navigation on the Danube — which makes all the riparian countries suffer. Procrastination, resisting the lifting of the blockade on the Danube under various pretexts defies international law and ignores the economic interests in the region. Every day, shipping companies accumulate huge losses, which add to the already heavy burden on the third countries in the area, accumulated during the years of the Yugoslav crisis.

Speaking of the situation in the Balkans in general, we have to say that we are far from having reached complete stability. We are still witnessing confrontation between the forces of integration and those of dissolution. Time has come to get rid of the ghosts of intolerance and hatred and open the door to the fresh air of the European spirit of integration. The results of the actions by the inflexible regime in Belgrade can be clearly seen today. Unfortunately, our neighbours are forced to cope with a destroyed and isolated economy and an unpredictable political situation in a Yugoslav State once viable and respected, yet finding itself, today, in a process of dismantlement. Politics should be judged by its results, and not by its intentions. We strongly wish for Yugoslavia to return to the European mainstream, for which it must re-embrace

the values of democracy, tolerance and freedom of expression.

The historic conflict in the Middle East is not over yet, but it is diplomacy that still gives us hope for a solution. I applaud the recent efforts made by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to come closer to a final settlement. This year we have also heard good news from the Korean Peninsula, a part of the world where history separated one people into two hostile parts. Romania is happy to see a fresh wave of diplomatic actions and human contacts that open new windows for an era of which the Korean people would be the first beneficiary.

For us it is obvious that total diplomacy can be successful if it is constantly and solidly based on human realities and on the fundamental aspiration of ordinary people to a peaceful and decent life. With the current, unprecedented level of knowledge we have reached, I am confident that we can find, in ourselves and our societies, resources for greater tolerance, mutual respect and dialogue, as opposed to the primitive inclination to hatred, intolerance and aggression.

It is incumbent to the United Nations, as the only international organization of universal vocation, to identify new resources for our concerted endeavours to find solutions to problems of global concern. I am glad to see that our position coincides in many respects with the major ideas agreed upon by participants in the Summit. The United Nations should stubbornly keep working to renew its profile and vigour while entering the new millennium. Romania will continue to be ready to add its contribution to that effect.

The Acting President (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the next speaker, His Excellency Mr. Abdul Ilah El-Khatib, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Mr. El-Khatib (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to His Excellency on his election as President of the current session of the General Assembly, wishing him all success in conducting its deliberations and in arriving at conclusions beneficial to the international community. I would like also to express our deep thanks to his predecessor, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, on his successful efforts in conducting the business of the fifty-fourth session. Furthermore, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of our Organization, for his report and his incessant efforts in the service of the purposes and principles of the Organization, with a view to enhancing its role and increasing its effectiveness in the international arena.

The General Assembly holds its fifty-fifth session in the wake of the Millennium Summit, which witnessed a historic meeting of world leaders held under the auspices of the United Nations. The significance and meaning of the Summit affirm the commitment of the international community to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This should lead to the enhancement of its role as the best framework for providing Member States with suitable mechanisms to organize and regulate international relations on the basis of cooperative partnership, particularly after the end of the cold war era and its concepts of polarization and balance of power, which had in the past instituted division and confrontation, depleted huge resources and caused widespread suffering in vast areas of the world.

Since the establishment of the United Nations the world has witnessed developments that require a review of the methods and policies adopted so far. First, calls for democracy and efforts to establish it and make it a way of life within States should be consistent with the establishment of democracy in international relations and within the United Nations itself. It is not logical to continue urging and calling for the establishment of democracy on one level while rejecting it on the international arena, where in fact there is a dire need for democracy in order to achieve equality among the Members of this organization — rich and poor, strong and weak.

During the past few years the United Nations has witnessed some changes in its methods of work. First and foremost we must emphasize the need to preserve the role of the General Assembly. The power of the Security Council, the executive arm of the Assembly for peace and security issues, should not be increased at the expense of the role of the General Assembly and its various other organs, which are supposed to provide balance and collective representation of the international will.

Clearly, there is international consensus that the present composition of the Security Council does not provide equitable representation of the international community and that there is a need to correct this

situation. Since all States have expressed their positions through extended debates, the actions required have become clearer and more specific.

All Member States, both developed and developing, agree that globalization and the abolition of borders and obstacles to economic exchanges present opportunities and pose risks. Although globalization facilitates the flow of goods and services as well as of ideas, it has presented the developing world with challenges related to deepening the gap between it and the developed world, particularly in view of differences in their respective levels of scientific and technological development.

Globalization has also put the identity and sovereignty of developing States and peoples to a painful test. Additionally, it has shown how difficult it is for developing countries to meet the requirements of integration into the world economy. While a majority of developing countries were struggling to enter the industrial era, they witnessed the entry of the developed world into an era of information technology. While they were striving to provide basic services, like infrastructure, health care, social welfare and education, they witnessed the frightening acceleration of technological and economic changes — a phenomenon that thwarted their hopes of catching up with developed countries.

While globalization, openness and economic integration make the world a unified economic environment, widening differences and deepening inequalities will inescapably cause damage to all in the long run. This situation makes it imperative to reformulate economic relations on the basis of cooperation and partnership. It also requires action to reduce differences, rectify economic imbalances and help developing countries adjust their economies to meet the requirements of globalization and integration. Furthermore, the experience of mankind has proved that poverty and huge economic and social disparities have always been the root causes of instability and confrontation.

The Middle East peace process is going through an extremely sensitive phase. During the past few weeks and months, major, commendable efforts have been made to make Palestinian-Israeli negotiations bear fruit — arriving at a lasting settlement between the two parties.

Jordan has made an essential contribution in all phases of the peace process. This contribution was motivated by Jordan's conviction that peace is the only real option for all States and peoples of the region. Indeed, geographic and demographic realities make it impossible for any party to settle the conflict by imposing its will or consecrating the status quo in its favour. Therefore, there is no alternative to establishing peace on the basis of law, international legitimacy, justice and equality.

Despite the failure of the recent Camp David summit to produce an agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis, it has enabled the parties to narrow the gap dividing their positions and made the requirements for reaching a settlement clearer. This confirms the need to continue the efforts by the United States in particular and the international community in general to build on what has been achieved so far.

The achievement of lasting peace in the region requires the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to independence and the establishment of their State on their national territory, with the Holy City of Jerusalem as its capital.

This means reaching implementable and sustainable solutions to the main issues, which are the subject of the permanent-status negotiations. Regarding the issue of territory, Israeli forces must withdraw from the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967), so that a Palestinian state may be established on those territories, with internationally recognized borders. Any security arrangements that may be agreed upon must not be based on any claim of sovereignty as a result of occupation.

The solution of the refugee problem must also be based on rules of international law and the various international conventions and on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which emphasizes the right of return and compensation to the refugees. Persons who were displaced as a result of the June 1967 war must be able to return to their homes in implementation of Security Council resolution 237 (1967).

The issue of Jerusalem is the key to peace in the region, and it must be solved on the premise that East Jerusalem is Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 to which resolution 242 (1967) applies. East Jerusalem should be under Palestinian sovereignty so that it may

become the capital of the independent State of Palestine. Arab and Muslim rights to the Islamic and Christian holy places in Jerusalem must be preserved. In no way can Israeli sovereignty over these holy places be accepted.

The status of Jerusalem and its spiritual and religious importance make it imperative that the city be an open city where freedom of worship and access to the holy places is guaranteed for all believers in God.

Jordan has suffered immensely during the past five decades as a result of the situation arising from the Palestine question, particularly the refugee problem. There are more than 1.5 million refugees living in Jordan. This amounts to 41 per cent of all refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This is in addition to the people displaced as a result of the June 1967 war. As a result of the refugee situation, Jordan has shouldered heavy financial, economic and social burdens.

Jordan will be subject to pressures that will threaten its stability and that of the region if the settlement does not satisfy its legitimate vital interests. Refugees and displaced persons in Jordan will only accept a settlement that recognizes their fundamental rights to return and to compensation.

It is well known that the vast majority of these refugees have Jordanian citizenship as a result of the unity that was established between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the West Bank in 1950. The declaration of unity at the time provided for the preservation of all Arab rights in Palestine and for the inalienability of the rights of the refugees.

Upholding the right of return will, therefore, enable every refugee to exercise freely his or her personal choice. Jordan must safeguard and preserve the rights of its citizens, which is its responsibility under national and international laws. Any solution that does not satisfy the rights of Jordan and its citizens will not lead to the establishment of a just and lasting peace.

Since the question of the refugees and their continued suffering has caused grave damage to Jordan and placed heavy burdens on it, Jordan demands rectification of the damage and losses that it has incurred. This rectification needs to include suitable and adequate compensation. Jordan will endeavour, by all possible means, to ensure that its legitimate claims with regard to this issue are considered.

It is worth mentioning that the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty stipulates that the solution of the refugee problem must be based on international law and that it should be dealt with bilaterally and in parallel with the permanent status negotiations. It also established a mechanism to deal with all financial claims between the two parties.

The rights of refugees and displaced persons to return and to compensation, and the rights of Jordan under international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy, take precedence over other considerations. Jordan, therefore, will only accept a settlement that will preserve its legitimate rights and ensure a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. Otherwise, the conflict will remain open and volatile, perpetuating the seeds of instability in the region. The position of the refugees in Jordan is vital to the success of any settlement to be reached.

Also on the question of refugees, Jordan once again emphasizes the importance of supporting UNRWA to enable it to carry out its mandate, which must continue until a solution to this question is fully implemented. Jordan, as host to the largest number of refugees and the largest donor to UNWRA, expresses its appreciation of the Agency's role and calls upon the international community to provide it with the needed financial resources to carry out its humanitarian tasks, particularly at this sensitive phase of the peace process. It also expresses appreciation to the donor States for their contributions.

Peace in the Middle East cannot last unless it is comprehensive. This makes the establishment of peace on the Syrian track essential and a sine qua non for peace in the region as a whole. Negotiations on this track must, therefore, resume in order to reach an agreement ensuring the return to Syria of the occupied Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967 in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon on the basis of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is a positive development that will hopefully serve as a foundation for the implementation of other Security Council resolutions, leading to the achievement of a comprehensive peace in the region, which has suffered for many decades from the depletion of its resources

and the energies of its peoples. Only peace will provide security for all. It should lead to ending the arms race and to using the resources for the development of the region and making it free from weapons of mass destruction.

Ten years have passed since the beginning of the Gulf crisis caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. As a result, the region as a whole continues to suffer. Iraq continues to pay a heavy price as a result of continued comprehensive sanctions imposed on it, which caused and continue to cause unprecedented mass suffering for the Iraqi people.

Jordan calls for launching a new thinking and a new look at the situation in Iraq in order to put an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people, especially since the collective sanctions, which are the severest of their kind in United Nations history, have not achieved their goal of consolidating peace and security. They have instead led to results that, in the long run, will give rise to dangers threatening the region as a whole. The need to implement and comply with Security Council resolutions does not conflict with the maintenance of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, nor with refraining from action that violates those resolutions. Iraq is an integral part of the region and its continued subjugation affects security and stability in the region as a whole. Jordan calls for the settlement of all matters related to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on the basis of full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including those dealing with Kuwaiti and other prisoners of war, and missing persons.

Jordan continues to suffer severe economic hardships as a result of compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions. Large segments of Jordan's economy have, as a result, sustained huge losses. It is, therefore, imperative to put an end to the negative effects of the sanctions on Jordan by showing better understanding of its situation, reviewing the policies and methods used in dealing with the sanctions regime and giving a more just interpretation to the relevant resolutions.

Because of our strong belief in the role of the United Nations, Jordanian armed forces participate effectively in its peacekeeping operations in several areas around the world. As a result, Jordan today is the second largest troop contributor to peacekeeping operations. While commending the report (A/55/305) of Mr. Brahimi's Panel on United Nations peace operations, Jordan wishes to reiterate the need for the provision of adequate means and resources to enable peacekeepers to achieve their noble objectives. We call for a constructive and thorough discussion of the report in order to produce the best possible means to attain that goal. In this spirit, we underscore the importance of conducting consultations with States that contribute to peacekeeping operations, before the adoption of major decisions concerning and affecting the status of their forces.

On another note, we feel that the startling developments witnessed by our world today, at various levels, make it increasingly necessary to rely on the United Nations to develop and establish norms in all matters pertaining to human security. The ongoing dialogue on the need to establish complementarity and balance between State sovereignty and human rights only reflects the importance of this issue. Sovereignty should not provide a cover for violating human rights. Hence, greater emphasis should be placed on the importance of objectivity, non-selectivity and impartiality when dealing with human rights issues.

It is illogical to continue to keep silent about the suffering of whole nations whose dignity is being undermined and whose human rights are being violated, while prominence is almost always given to other partial issues for purely political considerations.

With the onset of the third millennium the world is entering a new epoch that necessitates the formation of a new pattern of relations in the international arena based on our collective responsibility to develop and safeguard what has been achieved so far. Our world needs to establish a new paradigm of international relations based not on confrontation and exclusion, but on new foundations of openness and real partnership.

Integration, which encompasses the overlapping and interdependence of interests, presupposes partnership and solidarity among nations to help them manage change and ease the lack of confidence and hesitation associated with the fear of failure. The international community's willingness to encourage and support the will to change will certainly reinforce the capacity to deal with such change with minimum losses and convince those taking such a risk that today's world is not based on a zero-sum option and that the challenge that we all face is: How can man, regardless of ethnic background, economic situation or religious belief be the primary beneficiary of the

development achieved by humanity in modern times? This is the acid test we all face today. Will we succeed?

The President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. George Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

Mr. Papandreou (Greece): I express my sincere congratulations to the President on his election. I am certain his qualities and skills will bring a successful conclusion to the fifty-fifth session. May I also extend congratulations to Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, his predecessor, on what he achieved. Finally, I endorse the European Union's priorities paper, which was developed by Hubert Vedrine, the President of the Council of the European Union.

Some believe that violence might be an intrinsic part of humanity. But so are humanity's relentless efforts to rule out violence, regulate antagonism, peacefully resolve confrontational situations and prevent hatred and prejudice. Whether we come together to understand each other or to debate each other, our goal has always been to better our lives and build a more secure future.

Since ancient times, we have attempted to establish norms of peaceful coexistence. In this effort, we have built traditions and religions, as well as political structures. Through these norms we have tried to battle a fate seemingly dictated by force, poverty, oppression, prejudice, chronic and communicable diseases, inequality and a withering environment.

Throughout history, our efforts have taken various forms. But they have all commenced with a unique first step: the overriding principle that, in order to solve our problems, we need to work together.

This month is being marked by two events that will bring the peoples of our world much closer: the Millennium Assembly and the Olympic Games. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, nations will meet, compete, clash, differ and disagree. Yet our world has never looked more united or more determined to tackle its problems as one, indivisible community.

In the current environment, our efforts to build a better world for our children can and ought to be pan-cosmic. We can all contribute to a future that inspires our children and inspires the will to grow and to create. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has very wisely said,

> "We face global challenges which oblige us to work together. If that is true in the economic and social sphere, it applies even more to the challenge of massacre and war".

These words command even more authority coming from a man whose political skill, moral authority and devotion have contributed, in numerous cases, to the resolution of conflicting issues.

When a child misses its childhood and its education because it is in a dark prison cell, when a child is maimed from the explosion of a mine or when a child dies of hunger, of AIDS or in war, we do not witness just a tragic event. We do not witness only the sad state of some distant community. In today's world, when we see a child die, we lose another ray of hope that our global community will come together as one, that we shall live in peace and that we will finally tackle the challenges we all face together.

In Greece, we have become deeply conscious of this reality. What goes on in our neighbourhood directly affects the way in which our children will grow and develop. So we have made a commitment to our world and, more specifically, to our region, and it is this commitment that I have come to share with the Assembly today.

The two global events of this September — this Assembly and the Olympic Games — symbolize the beginning of an era for my country. After this ministerial week of the General Assembly, Greece will raise the Olympic flag in Sydney. For the second time in almost a century, the international community will bestow upon Athens the responsibility of the Olympiad.

Over the next four years, Athens has committed itself to run both an athletic and a cultural Olympiad. Today, I commit our county to an Olympiad for peace: four years of the most relentless efforts and a commitment to the international community to fight against the evils that have kept our community of nations at war, under totalitarianism and under oppression.

I pledge today that when the Olympic flame of our ancestors rises over the Athenian sky, it will light up more than a shiny stadium. It will light up a whole area of fighting for peace, democracy and justice. The next four years — the years that coincide with this Greek Olympiad — will set of the stage upon which

the future event will unfold. The globalization of the economy, the increased power of the media and rapid developments in information technology, communications and biotechnology are just some of these new challenges.

Globalization, while creating incredible wealth for many, fosters conditions for conflict and poverty. The new economy cannot be dominated by interests, and must be monitored to promote both democracy and human security. For the next four years, Greece will take an active role in international forums to do its part in dealing with this problem of globalization. That is why Greece has also enthusiastically accepted an invitation to join the Human Security Network.

Human rights laws alone cannot provide for human rights; they must be strengthened by civic responsibility and democratic institutions. We need to create structures that will reach beyond the democratic deficits of the global community. We need to create regional cooperation, build civic structures and community services and work with non-governmental organizations. We need to educate our citizens and our societies in making this process their own and allow their voice to be heard.

This, in our view, is the role of the United Nations. This honourable Organization can and must bridge the gap between the global challenges we face and the democratic deficits that exist in our global culture. We believe that now is the time to turn the United Nations from an Organization working to globalize democracy into an Organization that is also able to democratize the process of globalization. The Millennium Summit agenda is proof that the international community shares these views.

Initiatives taken within the United Nations can make our world a better place. Let me use a single but powerful example. On 7 September, nations were invited to sign and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts.

Whatever the causes of modern-day brutality towards children, the time has come to call for a halt — to call for a truce. The most fundamental principle is that children should have no part in war. This is only one of the initiatives that Greece will actively support in the international arena in the coming years.

At the same time, our view of the purpose of international organizations comes from the rich experience we have amassed in our region. Starting with the war in Kosovo, my country has been deeply involved in the events unfolding in the area. We believe that the lessons of this involvement can greatly contribute to the work of these organizations. We are eager to share our experience with the international community.

We believe that stability in our region is a prerequisite for Greek security, and we define stability to mean the practice of democracy, the strengthening of institutions that provide transparency and accountability, the reduction of economic inequalities and the rule of law in our societies and between our countries. Our security lies in being a member of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and we work so that countries in the region may benefit from the stabilizing influence of their future membership in these institutions.

During the Kosovo war, my colleagues in neighbouring countries and I decided to cooperate closely to alleviate human suffering and avoid further instability in our region. We grew to understand that our fates were intrinsically linked. As a result, we were compelled to discover ways to increase our cooperation and effectiveness in dealing with our problems. We would otherwise have been condemned to constant strife, conflict and isolation in the world. In the next four years, Greece will build upon this base. We are determined to transform the plight of a war and its brutal memories into an opportunity for generations to come.

Through this process, I hope that Greece has managed to inspire in the international community the importance of a consistent, universal and unifying policy towards South-Eastern Europe. From Bosnia to Cyprus, we have the same objectives: we want the countries in the region to be integral, peaceful and democratic; we want them to remain multicultural; and we want them to join the European Union. Yugoslavia, too, is an essential part of this political framework. We strongly desire to see the return of Yugoslavia to Europe. I would like to endorse my Romanian colleague's call to rethink our policy on sanctions, which often do more to serve purposes contrary to those for which we are striving.

That is our message. Even though it is simple sounding, our message is a radical break from the past, when favouritism, cold-war intricacies and double standards consistently broke the spirit of the people in the region. Now is the time to put an end to that. We must stop redrawing borders around ethnically homogeneous communities while compelling them to seek the favours of greater Powers. In the next four years, we will commit Greece to an effort to transform the multitude of races, religions and ethnicities in the region into an instrument of solidarity and stability — a beautiful kaleidoscope of creative, multicultural cooperation.

Greece's vision for the Balkans is one of a region in which democracy finally becomes the norm; where citizens' aspirations can finally be realized through peaceful and democratic practices; where the rights of minorities are respected; and where Governments are accountable, economies are transparent and politics allow for the fullest participation of all elements of society.

The world has a responsibility in supporting this vision for our region. We need to empower the region, which has historically been handicapped, dependent and divided by a world community of competing interests and a babble of conflicting signals. This balkanization of the region must be replaced by coordination of international efforts.

This is why we have actively supported and promoted this new vision within the international community. Last year our efforts helped more than 40 countries develop a unique contract between the international community and south-eastern Europe. The contract was coined the Stability Pact. We have a clear sense of how the Stability Pact can achieve its goals and it is an optimistic sign that the European Union, the United States and Russia cooperate closely within its framework. Regional integration can also be achieved as the Stability Pact promotes investment in infrastructure projects. Education is a primary goal and a strategy for democratic leadership and institution-building, which will stimulate economic growth and will bring us together. The pact actively promotes respect for the rule law among States and peoples in the region.

Our stand in international organizations and our agenda for the next four years is coloured also by our recent experience with Turkey. The earthquakes that shook Greece and Turkey a year ago created a new climate for the first time in our recent history. Tragedy generated a genuine feeling of human warmth. Spontaneous and dramatic acts of fraternity and solidarity were expressed. Our mandate was clear. Our peoples desire to live in peace together.

Since the earthquakes, Greeks and Turks are using every opportunity to explore their newly found neighbours, and to come together, meet, exchange experiences and make up for lost time. On a bilateral level we have signed 10 agreements that will radically change the environment in which we interact; in one year, 10 agreements. We do not view these developments as a momentary result of what was lately coined as seismic diplomacy. We view them as the beginning of a long process that will radically affect our lives in the coming years.

We have opened a dialogue; one that is honest. And although we may differ and do differ on many issues, such as how we see Cyprus or how we approach our bilateral relations, this open approach can only lead to a progressive resolution of our problems. When I speak today I know that those of the Turkish side will not or may not agree on many issues. But they know we are honest. We are honest in what we say and in our desire for a new and peaceful relation.

I believe that Greece and Turkey have no choice but to explore new avenues for cooperation. I believe our mutual interests can outweigh our political differences. We can and must resolve these differences through peaceful means; peaceful means of that of the International Court of Justice.

The European Union's decision to upgrade Turkey's status to that of a candidate country in Helsinki in December marked an historic turning point in Greek-Turkish relations. Helsinki does not signal the end of Greece's efforts; it represents the beginning of a new and equally courageous Greek initiative. In this context, we are ready also to further discuss confidence-building measures between Greece and Turkey.

I do not want to give the false impression that all our problems have suddenly been resolved. It is also most distressing that a variety of statements and acts still undermine this genuine and difficult effort, and there are those who certainly may wish that our efforts will fail. It is our historical duty to overcome these

difficulties and maintain the momentum in response to our peoples' mandate for peace.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General and all those who labour with him towards a just solution in Cyprus: a solution based on United Nations resolutions for a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation in one international personality, one citizenship and one sovereignty.

At this time, I would appeal to him to move forward with the peace talks on this basis. The implementation of United Nations resolutions is not only important for Cyprus. It is important for the moral standing of this all-important Organization. Double standards and inaction only serve to undermine the credibility of this Organization in the eyes of so many countries and peoples.

One cannot accept developments such as those that recently took place in Strovilia. This responsibility rests with the United Nations, with the guarantor powers and all those who have a say in international developments. It has become obvious that the current situation in Cyprus and its occupation by foreign forces challenges the integrity and credibility of this honourable Organization. I know this term may be painful, but Cyprus is an occupied island, and this must end. We need to go beyond the situation and it will take courage; courage from all involved.

A solution to the Cyprus problem can and should be seen as a win-win situation. It is vital for peace, stability and security in our region. I truly believe that the Greek-Cypriot and the Turkish-Cypriot communities can find solutions, and we must allow them to live together peacefully. We can aid them in this process. Greece and Turkey can aid them. Cyprus will either unite us or divide us, Greece and Turkey. We have a responsibility to cooperate on Cyprus and to facilitate the solution to this process. Greece and Turkey, through their rapprochement, share a rare opportunity to help the citizens of Cyprus rebuild their island, their homes and their dreams. The outcome of these efforts should be that every Cypriot enjoys safety, equality under the law, protection of their human rights, appropriate representation and security under a European roof.

Cyprus, Turkey and Greece: for anyone willing to envision the future, our futures are as interwoven as our histories. A reunified federal Cyprus, member of the European Union, will not only serve the European aspiration for stability in the region, but the aspirations of every citizen in every one of the countries involved.

I extend my appeal to the Turkish Cypriots. We want them near us, in our wider European family. In this family we do not only guarantee them the solidarity of the Greek people, but also the commitment of the Greek Government. Our citizens will only master the great possibilities that lie ahead if this last wall in Cyprus comes tumbling down.

Our experience in our region, our rapprochement with Turkey and our consistent efforts for a just solution in Cyprus have given Greece a new voice in the international community. We treasure our new capacity and intend to grow it further. During our Olympiad for Peace we plan to keep a close eye on developments in the Middle East, always seeking methods to facilitate the hopeful process. We shall follow closely developments in the South and particularly in Africa, a continent for which the Greek people share a special place in their hearts. Our emphasis will be on children: their rights, their right to avoid a violent life.

Our concentration in our Olympiad for Peace will be on international initiatives in which our country can play a role. Drawing on our ancient traditions, we are working to re-establish the practice of Olympic Truce. We aspire to the day when the tradition of suspending all hostilities during the Olympic Games becomes the seed for a more lasting peace. Huge amounts of resources are wasted on military procurements and war, and they must be channelled into health, education, culture and sport. To this end and in close cooperation with the International Olympic Committee and President Samaranch, we have established the International Centre for Olympic Truce in Greece.

In both ancient and modern Greek, the word for truce is *ekecheiria*. It has a dual meaning. It means setting one's weapons aside, but it also means reaching out one's hand in friendship. We do not simply aspire to a momentary truce, but to a continuous truce, an active truce.

The concept of Olympic Truce can complement the work of national and international organizations specializing in conflict prevention and resolution and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations sharing similar objectives. The Centre in Olympia will offer a sanctuary to support peace-building. This year we hosted children from war-torn areas in the Balkans.

Truce in Bosnia in 1992 allowed for children to be inoculated. Truce in Sidney this year will allow for North and South Korean teams to march under the same flags: an historic moment.

I started my address by saying that people coming together has always been the prerequisite for building a better world and a more secure future. I conclude by appeal to members. Take this ancient tradition, which by now is no longer exclusively Greek. It has become universal. Use this tool to complement efforts and inspire the younger generation for peace and cooperation, going beyond ethnic, racial, religious or other divisions.

This is the objective of the Olympic Truce. And this is the foundation upon which Greece shall build its four-year Olympiad for Peace.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I will now call on His Excellency Mr. Josep Piqué, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain.

Mr. Piqué (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish sincerely to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the work of the Millennium Assembly. I would also like to express my appreciation for the work of his predecessor, Foreign Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab, which culminated in the recent Millennium Summit.

I also welcome Tuvalu as a new Member State of the United Nations. I am sure that it will make a useful and enriching contribution to the work of the Organization.

What kind of United Nations do we want? Why, and to what purpose, do we need the United Nations in this new millennium? The Millennium Summit was convened to answer those questions. The task of the General Assembly is to devise and implement the guidelines that the Summit proposed. Spain would like to suggest some ideas for progress in three of the Organization's basic spheres of action: managing globalization, combating poverty and peace-making.

The United Nations that we want must be our main instrument for meeting the many challenges of globalization. Its universal nature places our Organization in an ideal position for that purpose. It would be unforgivable if it were not capable of rising to that task, which has to be undertaken in very different fields. One such area is human rights. The process of the universalization of human rights constitutes one of the United Nations most valuable contributions to international relations since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948. If the twentieth century has been one of formulating and structuring human rights on the international level, the next century must be that of ensuring that their effective implementation is universal.

The practices in most urgent need of elimination are racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. The 2001 World Conference against Racism must be an effective instrument to that end. We must also strive to abolish the death penalty, which we consider a punishment contrary to the dignity of the human being. The adoption of moratoriums against carrying it out could be a first step towards its total ban.

Our Organization must also enable us to provide solutions, in a spirit of solidarity, to humanitarian problems that until recently have simply not been addressed. The consequences have been borne by defenceless civilian populations. I refer to the situation of refugees and persons displaced within their own countries, civilian victims of armed conflicts and international aid workers who are subject to threats or coercion. It is essential to broaden the scope of our action in this area and to pay special attention to the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

Last week, in this very city, the President of the Spanish Government signed the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, relative to children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. In that same vein, the General Assembly this year adopted a resolution (54/262) agreeing to the holding in Spain in 2002 of the Second World Assembly on Ageing. We shall do everything possible to ensure the success of such an important event.

In this overall context, we must mention the issue of so-called humanitarian intervention, aptly proposed on more than one occasion by the Secretary-General. The United Nations that we want cannot be an Organization that remains paralysed in the face of massive violations of human rights, wherever they may take place. When that has occurred, its prestige has been seriously affected, and it has been left out of basic decision-making in times of crisis. The disgust provoked by a passive stance in the face of those atrocities and the need to strengthen the role of the

Organization in crisis situations are merely two sides of the same coin. It is essential that we be capable of building consensus on at least two fundamental issues.

The first is actions regarding which the international community cannot remain idle, such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, which are offences referred to in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Consensus should also be reached among the permanent members of the Security Council over the cases in which they should refrain from exercising their veto to block Council resolutions aimed at putting an end to massive violations of human rights. The principle of State sovereignty continues to be essential in contemporary international society, but it must not be used as a protective shield to trample upon human rights with impunity.

The establishment of the International Criminal Court signals the direction in which the international community is moving in that area. The creation of an international system of criminal justice constitutes the most important change in international law since the adoption of the San Francisco Charter. I am pleased to inform the Assembly that my country's process of ratification of the Rome Statute concluded yesterday. I hope that the International Criminal Court will become a reality in the not-too-distant future. I trust therefore that the Rome Statute will be signed and ratified by the largest possible number of States, without directly or indirectly affecting its integrity and effectiveness.

If there is one issue that makes us realize that there are global interests demanding our collective management it is that of environmental protection. It is imperative that the Kyoto Protocol for combating the greenhouse effect should come into force in 2002, at the latest. Spain is a signatory of the Protocol, as well as of the agreements on the ozone layer, bio-diversity, bio-security and desertification — the latter problem being one which especially affects my country.

Unfortunately, globalization has also generated fresh opportunities for the development of universal plagues such as terrorism and transnational organized crime. However, globalization also provides us with new instruments to combat them, provided we agree on how to use them. Spain supports the drafting of a general convention against international terrorism, and is grateful to India for its initiative in that respect. The work aimed at the adoption of a convention against transnational organized crime must also be concluded.

One of the United Nations top priorities is the fight against poverty. The Millennium Summit gave special attention to measures aimed at eradicating poverty. The specific implementation of those measures must be a basic aspect of the work of the General Assembly. The United Nations that we want must make it possible for developed and developing countries to conclude agreements regarding the role they must play in that task.

The high-level meetings that will be held in 2001 on financing for development and on the least developed countries must not be wasted. Spain will certainly do everything within its power to contribute to their success. My country follows the guidelines produced by the World Summit for Social Development suggesting that at least 20 per cent of cooperation resources be devoted to basic social sectors such as health, education, housing and employment, which have the greatest impact on the most disadvantaged sectors of the population and, as a result, on the eradication of poverty. Spain has prepared an ambitious microcredit programme aimed at meeting the needs of the least favoured sectors of the population of developing countries.

Likewise, Spain has begun debt relief programmes in several countries, including Mozambique and the Central American countries most affected by hurricane Mitch. We resolutely support the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Medium-income countries with serious external debt problems should not be excluded from debt relief plans, as long as they implement meaningful domestic programmes to eradicate poverty.

In the health sector there have been severe setbacks in recent years in the fight against infectious diseases, especially in Africa. Spain actively backs the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the efforts under way to facilitate access to drugs against AIDS for patients in developing countries. It also supports the holding of a special session of the General Assembly on that illness. Moreover, Spain has a special interest in examining possible action against other infectious and parasitic diseases, particularly in Africa.

The first sentence of the Charter states the resolve of the United Nations to save succeeding generations

from the scourge of war. We must not resign ourselves to the indefinite prolongation of some regional conflicts. In Africa a solution has not yet been found for the situation in the Congo, which for years has ravaged one of the richest and most influential countries of the continent. Angola and Sierra Leone continue to be the backdrop for civilian conflicts that are often financed by the illegal sale of diamonds and other precious resources.

Political and practical support for the United Nations and the mission deployed on the ground has been a constant feature of Spain's policy concerning the dispute over Western Sahara. Therefore, my country will maintain its commitment to a definitive settlement of that dispute during this decisive time and will support the efforts that the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy are making in compliance with Security Council resolution 1309 (2000).

New prospects for peace have opened up in the Middle East following the Camp David summit. It is vital to consolidate the important progress made there and take advantage of this historic opportunity to conclude an agreement on all outstanding issues. Spain considers that, pursuant to the Declaration of Berlin, the Palestinian people are entitled to establish their own state. The evolution of the peace process must be reflected in the resolutions to be adopted this year by the General Assembly, which must not be a mechanical repetition of the wording used in previous years.

The situation in Iraq is nevertheless proving to be frustrating. The interruption of weapons inspections, the absence of any foreseeable date for the lifting of the sanctions, the continuation of armed action and the difficult humanitarian situation in the country all combine to produce a situation that is far from encouraging. It is imperative that consensus within the Security Council on this matter be strengthened and that Iraq collaborate with the United Nations with a view to the full implementation of resolution 1284 (1999) and other relevant resolutions.

Turning to Latin America, it is vital that the international community send a clear message of support for the peace process in Colombia. The efforts by President Pastrana to reach an agreement that will put an end to decades of violence and lack of security deserve the support of us all.

The difficulties faced by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo in the accomplishment of its tasks should not overshadow its achievements to date in what is probably the peacekeeping operation with the widest-ranging objectives ever undertaken by the United Nations. Those objectives are to pacify the territory, to reconcile its population, to rebuild its economy, and to enable Kosovo, as stated in resolution 1244 (1999), to enjoy substantial autonomy and an administration that is truly its own, while respecting the principle of territorial sovereignty and integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Many of these conflicts could perhaps have been avoided. Spain unreservedly supports the Secretary-General's efforts to direct the Organization's conflict-prevention. His report on Africa provides an innovative approach, proposing a wide-ranging package of measures to address the conflicts on the African continent.

An important element in this arsenal of preventive diplomatic measures is a sound sanctions policy. Sanctions regimes must be carefully graduated in order to fulfil their goal: to penalize a particular government whose policies constitute a threat to peace, without harming the civilian population of that country, which in many cases is totally powerless to influence the decisions of its Government, or third parties. Sanctions must be applied in a flexible way and be subject to periodic review, enabling them to be adapted to changing circumstances.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are another two essential elements of conflict prevention. It is vital to overcome the setbacks suffered in recent months by the nuclear non-proliferation process and to promote the signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test- Ban Treaty, with a view to its early entry in force. It is likewise a matter of concern that it has not yet been possible to start negotiations on a protocol on fissile material; it is urgent to achieve the necessary consensus to that end.

The conclusion of the negotiations on the Verification Protocol to the Convention on Biological Weapons represents an achievement in this field that is as important as the entry into force of the Convention on Chemical Weapons. In the same way, the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects must constitute a milestone comparable to the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines.

Another of the United Nations goals must be to conclude the decolonization process worldwide by doing away with the last vestiges of colonialism. One of them persists, as a painful anachronism, in Spanish territory. I am, of course, referring to Gibraltar, where, nearly three centuries after its population was expelled and the Rock occupied by British troops, a colonial situation still lingers. This is an infringement of my country's territorial integrity and contravenes the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2353 (XXII). Regaining sovereignty over this part of our territory is a longstanding goal for Spain, which is fully in favour of a meaningful dialogue. It is regrettable that the United Kingdom has not yet shown a genuine political will to resolve this problem. Because of this, 15 years after the start of bilateral talks in the framework of the Brussels process and despite the decisions of the General Assembly, we have not registered any progress at all on this matter, in spite of several concrete proposals put forward by our side.

We want a United Nations that is capable of carrying out the tasks that have been entrusted to it. To achieve this, it must complete its process of reform. For instance, the role of the General Assembly — the only body in which all the Member States are represented — must be enhanced, as it is the United Nations driving force for debate and political impetus. Civil society should be incorporated to a greater extent into the Organization's work. This would contribute to bringing people closer to the United Nations and to securing a greater commitment from them with regard to its work.

It is also vital to reform the Security Council in order to enable it to fully perform its duties in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Spanish Government believes that this reform must draw its inspiration from the following principles.

First, it must be conducted on the basis of a broad and solid consensus, in order to avoid dangerous divisions among Member States and to provide the enlarged Council with the greater legitimacy it needs to carry out its work effectively.

In the context of democratization, it must allow for an increase in the number of non-permanent members from all regional groups, and especially from the developing world. Spain considers that an enlargement of this category of non-permanent members would best reflect the trend towards the democratization of international society at the dawn of the third millennium.

To enhance the Council's effectiveness, steps must be taken to prevent exercise of the veto power from blocking the Council in certain crisis situations.

Finally, there must be greater transparency. The Council's working methods must be improved by increasing the number and quality of the consultations among its members and with other Member States, so that the latter will not be left out of the decision-making process.

The Organization that we need must also be able to act firmly and effectively on the ground in order to maintain the peace. The first step in this direction is to reflect on past mistakes. Therein lies the importance of the Brahimi report on United Nations peace operations, which — in the same way as former reports on Rwanda and Srebrenica — hit a nerve when it acknowledged our faults and proposed solutions for overcoming them.

The Organization's shortcomings in this field have at times been very serious, and have cost human lives and brought great suffering to the peoples directly affected. They have also seriously discredited the United Nations in the eyes of our peoples.

Spain has a direct interest in ensuring that peacekeeping operations are well organized and managed, because at this time hundreds of Spaniards are participating in them in such faraway places as East Timor, Kosovo, Ethiopia and Guatemala. Moreover, last year Spain signed an agreement with the Secretariat on the Stand-by Forces — an agreement in which some of the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report already appear.

Spain steadfastly supports these recommendations and hopes that they will be rapidly implemented. At the same time, we must be aware that all of this will require a much greater political and financial commitment on the part of all with respect to peacekeeping operations. It will require faster deployment of the necessary military and civilian units and larger-scale measures in order to consolidate peace once conflicts come to an end. Above all, if United Nations troops are compelled to take greater risks in order to guarantee the implementation of Security Council mandates, such mandates must be clear, realistic and have the unequivocal backing of the Council. All this will require a serious effort to find

common positions and to achieve consensus within the Council in the elaboration of the resolutions containing such mandates, eliminating any ambiguities that could hamper their effective application. It means more resolute and unwavering action against specific States or groups which may attempt to disrupt such action, including the possible application of sanctions. Only then will we be able to send our troops to situations in which they will have to risk their lives in order to ensure that such mandates are upheld.

Improving peacekeeping operations will undoubtedly be costly. Neither this nor any of the other tasks facing the Organization will be possible if it does not resolve its financial crisis. Spain is the eighth-largest contributor to its regular budget and pays its contributions on time, in full and without conditions. Therefore we have a direct interest in seeing the Organization's financial crisis resolved once and for all, as soon as possible. The principle of capacity to pay must continue to be the basic criterion for deciding the assessed contributions. European Union countries already are contributing much more than they should to the United Nations budget in accordance with this principle. Spain's stance will be a constructive one in the negotiations to review the scale of assessments later this fall.

In an increasingly interdependent world, there is no alternative to multilateral cooperation. The United Nations must rise to the occasion in order to fulfil the expectations of the peoples who founded it. The countries represented here must face up to that responsibility by building an Organization capable of meeting the challenges posed by globalization in the new millennium. The United Nations that we want is possible. It is within our reach to achieve it.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I call next on Her Excellency Mrs. Camara Hadja Mahawa Bangoura, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Guinea.

Mrs. Bangoura (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I am very pleased on behalf of the people and the Government of Guinea to convey to Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland our warmest congratulations on his unanimous election to preside over our deliberations at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. His election highlighted his merits, his personal qualities and his rich experience in international affairs. It also reflected the high esteem in which the international community holds his great country, Finland, whose commitment to the ideals of peace, justice, progress and the advancement of women is well known and appreciated by one and all. As a member of the General Committee at this session, my delegation wishes to assure the President of its support and full cooperation.

It gives me pleasure also to pay tribute to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab of Namibia, who honourably carried out his weighty responsibilities in the service of the Organization.

Let me also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose exemplary work at the helm of the Organization merits our highest appreciation and our support. I take this opportunity moreover to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/54/2000) entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". That remarkable document takes account of all the current concerns of Member States.

I welcome the admission of the State of Tuvalu as the one hundred eighty-ninth Member of the Organization. This reinforces the universality of the United Nations.

This session of the General Assembly is a historic one. It is taking place just as the Organization has successfully concluded the Millennium Summit, which brought together in this Hall nearly all the world's leaders. The outcome of that important Summit is a source of hope for our peoples at the dawn of the new millennium.

Just one week ago, from this very rostrum, the Prime Minister of Guinea informed the international community of a barbarous act of aggression against the Republic of Guinea, an act of aggression whose sole aim was to destabilize my country. Deadly, devastating attacks have been carried out against the peaceful population of Guinea. These were led by armed gangs from Liberia, but it is regrettable to have to note that another fraternal African country, Burkina Faso, has also been involved in the aggression. The Republic of Guinea, a land of peace and hospitality, which has paid an enormous price by receiving hundreds of thousands of refugees and which is working for the restoration of peace and harmony in West Africa, has thus been the victim of aggression by the same people who caused the genocide and mutilations in Liberia and in Sierra Leone.

I urgently call on the international community strongly to condemn this aggression, which is part of a plan to destabilize the subregion. It is this that justifies my Government's request to the Security Council that vigorous measures be taken to guarantee peace, security and stability in the West African region.

The Government of Guinea has had to face the severe consequences of the massive presence of 800,000 on its territory for the past decade, and it has been obliged to divert resources from our country's economic development programmes. That is why my Government is most grateful for the United Nations initiative to convene a conference for support and solidarity with respect to Guinea. On behalf of my Government, I wish once again to convey my delegation's sincere thanks to the Secretary-General and to all others who have contributed to this important initiative. My country looks forward with great interest to the completion of this initiative with the convening of a second meeting, scheduled to be held in November at Geneva.

This is the proper moment for my delegation to turn to the thorny question of conflict in Africa. Indeed, many of the crises that have emerged on our continent pose a threat to peace and constitute a grave violation of the principles and purposes of the United Nations. The scope of these crises and their proliferation jeopardizes all efforts at national development and at achieving subregional integration. I take this opportunity to welcome the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. Its recommendations enabled the Security Council to adopt an important resolution on ensuring an effective role for the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly in Africa. My delegation hopes that the new provisions of that resolution will be used to guarantee the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Among the central priorities of Africa, which remains the theatre of many conflicts, is the strengthening of its capacity to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. Thus, whether it be the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea or the situation in the Great Lakes region, in Angola or in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there have been significant breakthroughs in the pursuit of peaceful, just and lasting solutions, thanks to concerted action by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations.

In the West African region, the quest for peace in Sierra Leone is continuing with the commendable assistance of States members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and with the active support of the United Nations, through the deployment of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). My delegation expresses its full support for Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), which placed an embargo on the illegal sale of diamonds from conflict zones. We appeal urgently to all States and to all specialized agencies to cooperate actively in the effective implementation of that resolution.

The proliferation and uncontrolled distribution of light weapons is another subject of grave concern, and is a major factor complicating and prolonging conflicts in Africa and, more tragically, encouraging the recruitment of child soldiers. Indeed, the resurgence of rebel movements and the expansion of large-scale banditry in our countries have been made possible by that phenomenon. The firm support of the international community is required to eradicate it. In that connection, my delegation is pleased at the initiatives taken by the United Nations and by the OAU to support the efforts of our States to combat this scourge, which threatens the stability of our continent.

The beginning of the third millennium brings many challenges and hopes. It brings the hope of seeing a plan for the settlement to the conflict in Western Sahara, thanks to the joint efforts of the OAU and the United Nations, and the hope of finally seeing Israel and its Arab neighbours give peace a chance through a just and lasting settlement to the crisis, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, as well as the respect for the rights and dignity of all peoples in the region.

The question of development remains one of the major challenges of this century, and as such it must remain at the centre of our Organization's concerns.

At a time when a portion of the planet has contentedly crossed the threshold of this new millennium and is embarking, under the rubric of globalization, on what is called "the new economy", a major portion of the world — indeed, the largest portion — continues to live in poverty, suffering the perverse effects of this globalization.

With regard to the alarming situation prevailing on the African continent, the main concern of the

peoples of the United Nations must be Africa, so that the root causes of its non-development can be eradicated and so that it can be enabled to eliminate poverty and enhance its capacities in order for it to have better access to markets. To do that, debt cancellation, an increase in official development assistance and better attention to its specific needs should make it possible to integrate the African continent into the world economy. That is why my delegation, based on the correlation between peace and development, is pleased at the recent decisions taken by the G-8 in Okinawa, aimed at more effectively combating poverty and at bridging the digital gap between the North and the South and at humanizing globalization.

In that respect, my country calls for more solidarity on the part of the rich countries, and we deeply hope that — over and above professions of good faith — concrete measures will be taken to allow the developing countries, particularly those in Africa, to experience sustained growth leading to sustainable development.

With that in mind, my delegation appeals to all its development partners to contribute, by means of more generous and better-targeted aid, to strengthening the institutional capacities of our States and to creating adequate infrastructures, which guarantee balanced development and success in the struggle against poverty.

The Republic of Guinea is very much concerned by the ravages of the AIDS virus. We believe that this battle must further mobilize the international community so that the necessary sacrifices can be made to halt this scourge, which has taken more victims in Africa than anywhere else in the world. That is why my delegation supports the important decisions that resulted from the recent International Conference held in Durban, South Africa.

The protection of fundamental human rights, the satisfaction of priority human needs and social justice must remain at the forefront of United Nations concerns. The United Nations, in its irreplaceable role as an instrument for the promotion of cooperation and understanding between peoples, must strengthen the culture of peace and sharing.

Today it is unanimously acknowledged that the United Nations can continue to play an effective role only if there is a necessary reform of its organs, in particular the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The aspirations of strengthening its authority and ensuring more equitable representation in the Council for the Organization's Members have been reiterated many times by the overwhelming majority of United Nations Members, and recently by virtually all of the heads of State or Government during the Millennium Summit. We must also restore to the General Assembly its central role as the main deliberative body and, finally, reform the other organs, with a view to a greater revitalization of the entire United Nations system. These are the aspirations of the peoples of the United Nations — to enable this Organization to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

In his statement at the Millennium Summit, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea reiterated the total commitment of our country to the principles of the United Nations and to the Charter. In this Assembly, I would like to reaffirm this commitment, which has never been found wanting in the history of my country. Under the leadership of its President, General Lansana Conté, a man of peace and dialogue, Guinea has always struggled to uplift human dignity, to defend freedom, to restore peace and to cultivate harmony among peoples.

Guinea will continue, side by side with other Member States of our Organization, to work resolutely to free humankind from the spectre of war, violence, exclusion and intolerance, and for a world of peace, justice and solidarity for all.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I can assure you, Mr. President, that I will speak for far less than 10 minutes.

I would like to respond briefly to the remarks made by the Foreign Minister of Spain this afternoon about Gibraltar. The long-standing position of the British Government on this matter is well known to the

Government of Spain. I will simply restate it briefly here.

British sovereignty over Gibraltar was clearly established in the Treaty of Utrecht. This legal fact is incontrovertible. Moreover, the British Government stands by the commitment to the people of Gibraltar, as contained in the preamble to the 1969 Constitution of Gibraltar, which states that Her Majesty's Government will never enter into arrangements under which the people of Gibraltar would pass under the sovereignty of another State against their freely and democratically expressed wishes.

The British Government believes that issues relating to Gibraltar can be resolved only by building trust, cooperation and dialogue, and through direct talks aimed at overcoming differences, such as those established under the 1984 Brussels declaration.

We attach continuing importance to our dialogue with Spain.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation has just listened with a great deal of interest to the statement made by Mrs. Bangoura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea.

With regard to the unfounded accusation that has just been made against my country, Burkina Faso, I deem it essential to recall here and now the comments made by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso yesterday, when he referred here to the unfortunate situation in Guinea. The Minister stated that

> "in the face of the recent surprising, to put it mildly, allegations by Guinea, we would like to reassure that beloved, fraternal country, as well as the international community, that Burkina Faso had no part, directly or indirectly, in those unfortunate events. We repeat our readiness to welcome or support any initiative that could shed light on this matter, which we find profoundly distressing". (*A/55/PV.13*)

That assurance was not able to ease the minds and hearts of some people. We became aware of this earlier when we heard the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Guinea speaking.

Let me state here once again that these renewed accusations are unfounded. On behalf of my delegation, I reiterate our readiness to work towards finding the truth of this matter.

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation followed with great interest the statement made in right of reply by the representative of brotherly Burkina Faso. We are pleased by the spirit of fraternity demonstrated by the delegation of Burkina Faso.

My delegation would like once again to reiterate — as was done first from this rostrum by our Prime Minister and earlier today by our Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation — the willingness of Guinea to maintain and develop its relations with all African countries. In the history of Africa since 1958, we have never contributed to the destabilization of any country. On the contrary, we have always paid a price for the liberation and the consolidation of the independence of African countries.

Our words today are not mere assertions; they are based on concrete information in our possession concerning recent events in Guinea. Everyone will recall that this is not the first time this issue has been raised. These connections were stressed during the most difficult moments of the war in Liberia and again during the current conflict in Sierra Leone, which has claimed so many victims. Once again, as to the painful events in our country, we have sad proof that Burkina Faso was involved.

At any rate, my delegation wishes to reiterate to my brother from Burkina Faso that Guinea remains willing to maintain the most cordial and friendly relations with his country, so long as respect is maintained for the territorial integrity of our country.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.